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JESUS CHRIST
DURING HIS MINISTRY

JESUS CHRIST:
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I. JESUS CHRIST BEFORE HIS MINISTRY.

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III. THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF
JESUS CHRIST. (*In preparation.*)

JESUS CHRIST DURING HIS MINISTRY

BY

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P R E F A C E

I PROPOSE in the following pages to speak of Jesus Christ during his ministry. With but rare exceptions I shall carefully banish from this book all discussion of the text, every interpretation of it, theological or critical. I shall relate only established facts, or facts easy to establish, and shall permit myself to make no conjectures but such as are entirely plausible. The task as I conceive it has therefore its limit; nevertheless, it is still sufficiently complex to forbid me to embarrass it by the discussion of controverted passages. But wherever the fact is certain and the sayings of Jesus perfectly authentic, I shall make use of them, and shall endeavor to draw from them all that they actually contain.

I would add that I shall pass over in silence many details, which though important are not essential to the end which I propose to myself.

It is to be observed, indeed, that my title is not "The Ministry of Jesus Christ," but "Jesus Christ during his Ministry," which is different. I propose, in fact, to speak above all things of Jesus himself, to ask what he thought, what he purposed to do, what he professed to be, and, as my general title says, what he said of his *person*, what *authority* he claimed, and what *work* he desired to do. I desire to look for nothing else, and to speak of nothing else; and here, as in my first volume, I judge it to be needless to repeat what the Gospels say. I shall particularly seek for what they have not said, but in this search I take as point of departure certain data given by the Gospels themselves:

It is therefore not my intention to follow the usual method of Lives of Jesus, setting forth the New Testament narratives in a more or less chronological order, and

studying them critically and exegetically. I shall take the Bible story as a whole, and shall try to draw from the impression left by reading it a picture of the person of Christ, and especially a history of his thought.

I shall touch upon the events which occurred in the life of Jesus only so far as they may serve to throw light upon what took place in his soul.

In this, as in the first volume, the reader will see that Jesus “destroyed” nothing, and that he “fulfilled” all things. This word is the key of many apparent enigmas and contradictions. I hope to show that everything that Jesus said, did, thought, and preached had its roots in the past, and by a slow and sure evolution was made by him entirely new.

One word more: In writing this book I would not forget that the moral and religious life is not to be studied as natural history is studied, that a simple statement of facts does not explain everything, and that the methods which lead to an acquaintance with the spiritual world can by no

means be the same as those which lead to a knowledge of the world of nature. Here as elsewhere the saying of Pascal is true: "The heart has its reasoning which the reason knows nothing of;" and the soul may have intuitions of the true which objective observation will forever fall short of giving to the learned.

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INTRODUCTION

THE SOURCES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

THE earliest information about Jesus which we have is given us by St. Paul. His name is continually repeated in the few letters of the apostle which have come down to us, and Paul appears to have been very precisely informed upon the principal events in the life of his Master. Had he known him personally? It can hardly be supposed; but it is highly possible that he had seen him, and often seen him, walking in the porticos of the Temple; perhaps he had heard him replying to the Pharisees when he himself, a young and high-spirited disciple of Gamaliel, was carrying on his studies in Jerusalem.

However this may have been, Paul counted among his intimate friends men who had lived in Jesus' company, Barnabas¹ and Silas,² for example, and in the earlier

¹ Acts iv. 36, etc.

² Acts xv. 22.

days John surnamed Mark,¹ who later became the companion of Peter.

Paul had also spent a fortnight at Jerusalem with Peter and James;² he had had the opportunity of receiving from their lips many details of the life of Christ, and he certainly had done so. We know that Paul narrated the life of Jesus in his churches, and in particular that he described his Passion in such moving terms that it seemed as if Jesus were crucified anew before his hearers.³ He also described the resurrection of the Lord — we know with what power and what insistence.⁴ More than this, his letters abound in allusions to the teachings of Jesus, concerning marriage,⁵ for example, or the Lord's Supper,⁶ or mere citations of the Master's precepts.⁷

Taken as a whole the testimony of St. Paul gives a very accurate, very clear, and very lifelike portrait of Jesus. The principal features of his life are brought out by the apostle, and his allusions con-

¹ Acts xii. 12, 25.

² Gal. i. 18, 19.

³ Gal. iii. 1.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. and *passim*.

⁵ 1 Cor. vii. 10 f.

⁶ 1 Cor. xi. 23 ff.

⁷ See also Acts xx. 35.

firm in advance that which the Gospels say at a later day.

This, in a few words, is what Paul gives us to know about Jesus: his birth, his Davidic origin, the time of his appearing, which was that determined by God, the humility of his earthly condition, his perfect holiness, his Messianic dignity, the character of his life: perfect fulfilment of the will of God; that of his mission: to preach, himself, to the people of Israel only, and to leave instructions for the future with twelve apostles, by them making the gift of his Gospel to all men; his death upon the cross, which is the seal of the new covenant; the circumstances accompanying his death; the last supper; the institution of the Holy Communion; the betrayal by Judas; finally the resurrection on the third day; the order of the appearances of the Risen Lord, concluding with his life in heaven with God, whence he shall return to judgment. It is evident that in the details given and the allusions here and there made by St. Paul, nothing essential is lacking in the life of Jesus Christ.

After St. Paul we must cite as among the most ancient documents the earlier

chapters of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Not that this book was written at an early date; at earliest it was hardly written before the year 80; but in the beginning of his narrative Luke, who is its author, gives a picture of the first Church in Jerusalem, — a Church composed of ocular witnesses of the earthly work of Jesus, his immediate disciples, who in the words they utter recall the essential features of their Master's life.

The discourses of Peter, especially, are extremely important. In them we see what was the Gospel of the earliest days; when the apostle speaks of Jesus Christ we have the witness of the disciple to his Lord given only a few weeks after his death. He pictures Jesus as a just man, approved of God and men, the servant of Jehovah, preaching the Good Tidings, healing the sick, going about doing good, choosing twelve apostles.¹

He also narrates his death, with the betrayal by Judas, the special guilt of the Sadducees in forcing Pilate's consent, the accusation brought against the Christ of having wished to destroy the Temple

¹ Acts ii. 22 ff.; iii. 13 ff.; iv. 10 ff.

and abrogate the Law, his resurrection on the third day, the preaching of remission of sins through his name, — all this expressed with a grand simplicity which inspires confidence. The narratives with which the Book of the Acts opens give us the primitive Gospel, that of the oral tradition; they have an unmistakable stamp of originality, and are of priceless value to the historian.

But it is very evident that if we knew nothing more about Jesus than this, his person and work would remain almost unknown to us. Neither the Jews nor the Gentiles of his day wrote of him. The Talmud mentions his name, it is true, and even assumes to narrate his trial; but the story merits no credit, being only a tissue of falsehoods dictated by hatred.¹ Yet it serves to confirm the fact that Jesus withstood the legalism and formalism of his people, and attacked the traditional precepts of the Pharisees.

As for Gentile writings, Suetonius, in an inexact and insignificant passage, mentions Jesus Christ under the name Chrestus;²

¹ *Jerus. Talm. Sanh.* 14, 16; *Babyl. Sanh.* 43 a, 67 a.

² *Life of Claudius*, § 16.

Tacitus, somewhat more explicit,¹ speaks of “Christ who was put to death under Tiberius, by the order of Pontius Pilate, and whose detestable superstition has spread everywhere abroad, even unto Rome.” Finally, the younger Pliny, early in the second century, describes in a letter to Trajan² the assemblies of Christians in his province, saying that they sing hymns, “speaking to Christ as to a God.” All these insignificant facts, which we mention only for the sake of completeness, teach us nothing about Jesus Christ which we did not already know; and, all things considered, the Gospels are the only true source of the life of Jesus.

Let us endeavor to describe how they were written, and say what degree of confidence we may accord to them. If we study them attentively, collecting the testimony of the oldest Fathers of the Church concerning the writings of the apostolic epoch, the following is what we shall discover:—

The first disciple of Jesus who to our knowledge³ concerned himself with put-

¹ Annals, xv. 44. ² Correspondence, 10, 96.

³ “To our knowledge,” because a great number of

ting into writing his Master's words, is the apostle Matthew. Between the years 50 and 60 he composed a collection of the discourses, sayings, and parables of Jesus, writing it in the Aramaic tongue, that is, in the very language in which Jesus spoke. Matthew's collection was several times translated into Greek with many alterations, but none of importance. This primitive writing by Matthew, that is, the collection of the sayings of Jesus in Aramaic, no longer exists.

About ten years after Matthew, between 60 and 70, a disciple of Peter, John surnamed Mark, who served him as interpreter, wrote a summary of the preachings of that apostle. This writing still exists just as Mark composed it; it is our second Gospel. It is true that some critics hold that ours is only a second recension, differing somewhat from the original. But this hypothesis is not indispensable, and it is probable that it is the very text of Mark which we have before us. Later appeared a Gospel which also has been preserved, which we have in our New Testament,

gospels were written in the first century, all except four being lost.

which we call the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and whose true author is unknown.

This is how this author composed his book. He took one of the Greek translations of Matthew's collection of discourses, and also the summary of Peter's preaching which Mark had made, and combining these two documents he produced our first Gospel. Here and there he added what he had learned from oral tradition; for example, the manner of Jesus' coming into the world, his genealogy, his birth, the visit of the Wise Men; the opening chapters of his book; and a few other facts scattered through the body of the work, which he alone relates.¹ The author had a well-defined purpose in writing this Gospel: to prove that Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies relating to the Messiah, and realized the promises made to the Jews in the Old Testament.

About the same period, a little after 70 A.D., Luke composed the third of the Gospels which we have in the New Testa-

¹ For example, the miracle of the stater, xvii. 24-27; the resurrection of the saints at the time of Jesus' death, xxvii. 52, 53.

ment. This document, as we have it, has undergone no retouching. In writing it Luke had before him several narratives of the life of Jesus. As a foundation he too made use of one of the Greek translations of Matthew's collection of the discourses, though not the one made use of by the author of the first Gospel, and differing somewhat from that one. He also took advantage of the Gospel by Mark. In the third place he had at hand a collection made at a date unknown to us, including a number of words and deeds of Jesus during one or more journeys between Galilee and Judea, and of which the writers of the first two Gospels had no knowledge. This narrative of the travels of Jesus Christ was utilized by Luke from verse 51 of chapter ix. to verse 28 of chapter xix.

Luke had still other sources at his disposal. Such were the accounts of the Passion of Jesus Christ which he heard Paul give when he accompanied him on his missionary travels, and a collection by himself of Aramæan traditions concerning the birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ.

Such is the origin of our first three Gospels.

To find the most authentic accounts of Jesus Christ we must first turn to the Gospel by Mark: it is the oldest; it should be the fundamental basis of every orderly narrative of the ministry of Jesus. The facts he gives should take precedence on all accounts. The Gospel of Mark is more impersonal than those of Matthew and Luke. While these have each their own purpose, and pursue it, Mark has no other aim but to relate what he remembers, and he gives the facts in chronological order. His Gospel is consequently a true drama, the drama of the life of the misunderstood and murdered Messiah. There is no digression, no delay, no pause. All is animated, simple, natural. Mark neither interprets facts nor accounts for them; he shows them. Therefore is this admirable document not simply the oldest Gospel; it is at the same time the surest, the most faithful, the most exact. But it is incomplete, and the critic must complete it with the aid of the other two Synoptics.

In this work his first care should be to compare Matthew and Luke, seeking all

that they have preserved to us of the collection of discourses made by the apostle Matthew. In fact, we find in our first and third Gospels the substance of the words of Jesus collected by Matthew, since each of the authors had before him a Greek translation of this collection.

This, therefore, is the most authentic common foundation, the solid base of what we most certainly know about Jesus Christ.

Where the three accounts differ we must choose between them, always seeking the eldest text, a critical work of by no means insurmountable difficulty. Here the duty of the historian is to eliminate suspicious traditions, all that betrays a tendency foreign to strict historic verity, as, for example, the injunctions which arise from doctrinal prepossessions. This work done, we must determine the framework of Jesus Christ's ministry, and make clear the order of the facts. It would be utterly impossible to perform this task if we had not the fourth Gospel, and here is the great usefulness, let us rather say, the unequalled value of the account of the life of Jesus of which it yet remains to speak.

With regard to the fourth Gospel, as with regard to the first three, historical criticism has arrived at nearly definitive results.

It is impossible to misapprehend the unhistorical character of this book. We mean by this that the author deliberately sets aside a great number of important events, and that his intention is not to give us a biography of Jesus Christ, but to prove that Jesus was verily the Word made flesh, or, as he himself said, the Christ, the Son of God.¹ It results from this that his account is quite fragmentary, and tinctured with theological considerations completely foreign to the history. This is an incontestable fact, which should be recognized by every one.

The fourth Gospel, then, cannot serve as a basis for the study of Jesus Christ's ministry, and this is why we began by speaking of the first three. They alone give us a solid preliminary standpoint.

But we have also to find a standpoint in the fourth Gospel. All has by no means been said when it is said that this writing may not be taken for a complete

¹ John xx. 31.

narrative of the life of Jesus; it remains to point out its high documentary value.

Side by side with the general unhistoric character which it presents to the impartial reader, another not less indisputable fact remains in our opinion to be recognized; that is, that the author lived in intimate association with an ocular witness of the life of Jesus, — a witness who felt himself to be of such authority as to give a different account from that of the first three evangelists, whose books he perfectly well knew, of sufficient authority to correct them, and put forth assertions which completed, rectified, and sometimes contradicted theirs. The author of the fourth Gospel knows to their minutest details a great number of perfectly certain, entirely authentic facts in the life of Jesus, of which the authors of the first three narratives were entirely ignorant.

More than this: with regard to the two critical moments in the life of Jesus Christ, the revulsion of popular feeling after the multiplication of the loaves, and his death upon the cross, this author is at one with the first three evangelists, confirming and completing them. And, finally, the outline

of the life of Jesus which he gives is much better than theirs. They mention only one journey of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem, which is more than unlikely, which is impossible. The author of the fourth Gospel parts company with them at this point, mentioning several such journeys, because he is more accurate and knows the facts better.

For this reason the fourth Gospel is full of personal recollections whose character it is impossible to mistake. To take only a single example, its account of the Passion is the most vivid of the four, and among other details of marvellous truth the character of Pilate is admirably brought out.

It seems to us impossible to deny the fact that the ocular witness of whom we speak can be no other than an apostle, and this apostle no other than John. If the form given to the discourses of Jesus is peculiar to the author of this book, and if the fourth Gospel abounds in theological deductions which can be nothing other than the evangelist's own reflections and not the authentic words of Jesus,¹ there

¹ It is to be observed that, in the first century, an author writing the life of any one not only put into

are also many utterances put into the mouth of the Christ which are certainly quite as historical as those which the first three evangelists attribute to him, and which bear the inimitable stamp of the authentic words of the Lord.

Therefore this book, which is not a life of Jesus Christ (it is at once too dogmatic and too fragmentary for that), is nevertheless a very accurate document, and must be consulted by those who would understand the life of Jesus. It may even be said that upon many essential points it is by much the most accurate of the four. Only the authority of an apostle can be the basis of a book which, when it appeared, differed so widely from the first three Gospels already received by the Church, accepted as true, consecrated by piety, and which parted company from them so entirely.¹

his mouth what he had really said, but what he might have said; and the words which the author was convinced that he might have uttered were considered quite as authentic as if he had really spoken them.

¹ The proofs of the historicity of the fourth Gospel so far as the last week and the Passion are concerned, are of altogether convincing force. Jesus names himself to the soldiers who have come to arrest him,

Who, then, is the author of the fourth Gospel? Let us ask the book itself. It replies clearly that he draws very immediately from St. John, but is not St. John. When he speaks of the "beloved disciple," he speaks in the third person. Of course this might be only a literary form. Antiquity affords us a well-known example. The Commentaries of Julius Cæsar were written by Cæsar himself, and nowhere does he designate himself by the pronoun of the first person. But the system adopted by the writer of the fourth Gospel is very

Judas goes out from the upper chamber after receiving the sop, etc. The Gospel clears up many seeming improbabilities in the Synoptic account. John states that Jesus died on the very day when the paschal lamb was eaten; so does the Talmud ("the eve of Pæsca," Babyl. *Sanh.* 43a, 67a). He says nothing of the payment of money to Judas. With regard to the six months before the Passion, John alone is well informed. He shows the death of Jesus as already resolved upon in the month of February or March (xi. 53, 54); at that time Jesus retires to Ephraim, the order for his arrest is given (xi. 55, 56). The Synoptics know nothing of all this. Finally and especially the fact that immediately after his arrest Jesus was led to Annas (xviii. 13), who, as we know, had a house on the Mount of Olives, is the strongest possible proof of the historic value of the fourth Gospel (cf. Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, 1st edition, p. 394.)

different, for not simply does he never speak of John except in the third person, he is careful to distinguish himself from him; he speaks of John without ever naming him, and always in terms of eulogy; he designates him with veiled expressions and in terms of invariable admiration: it is evident that he is tenderly attached to him. He brings out John's superiority, and the peculiar affection of Jesus for him. The apostle John, writing for himself, would not thus have written about himself; and yet all that we have said of the Johannine origin of the fourth Gospel remains. One solution alone is possible,—this book was written by a disciple of St. John who drew his inspiration from his master. We may almost say that the fourth Gospel was composed in collaboration by the apostle John and one of his disciples who acted as penman; and just as he has nowhere written his master's name, he has nowhere made an error, and this book has nothing in common with what is called a pseudepigraph.

We have one proof of this assertion in a fact which it is impossible to contest. It is universally admitted that chapter xxi.

was added to the Gospel after its completion and even after St. John's death. Now, the style of this appendix — which in any case is not that of St. John, since it was written after his death — is precisely the same as that of the Gospel. It is by the same writer; then this writer not being John for the twenty-first chapter is also not John for the first twenty chapters. The appendix was added by the disciple who, a little while before, had written the Gospel under the direction of the apostle. This appears to us incontestable.

It is to be remarked also that the Gospel of John was thought in Hebrew, that the construction of the sentences is entirely Hebraic. We may therefore admit that we have an almost literal translation, made by him who held the pen while the apostle spoke to him in Aramaic. There was a duality of authorship, — a duality which is indeed betrayed by the pronoun in the first person plural, here and there employed.

More than this, the writer-secretary from time to time introduces his own reflections. For example he says: "He that hath seen

hath borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.”¹ That is to say, “John attested what he saw when he related to me the death upon the cross, and now he knows that his attestation is true; I hear him saying so at the moment when I am writing these lines.” This is evidently a personal reflection of the writer, a writer who is not “he that hath seen.”

This literary method of a book written by two people appears at first strange. It is not in the least so, if we put ourselves back in the time of the apostles. They, especially Peter and John, must have been very ill versed in Greek, if indeed they so much as knew a word of it. But if they wrote epistles or gospels, they could publish them only in Greek. If they had written them in their mother tongue, their books would not have been widely scattered, and they would have been lost, as Matthew’s collection of the sayings of Jesus was lost. They therefore took collaborators, aids, secretaries. Peter, who had John Mark for interpreter, had also Silas, and caused Silas to write his epistle.

¹ John xix. 35.

He says it in so many words.¹ In the same way John, having to write a gospel, acquitted himself of his task as he could, giving the facts to a secretary who assuredly was not chosen at hap-hazard, and who made admirable use of what the apostle related to him.

To return now to the question which we have put to ourselves: How may we reconstruct the outline of the ministry of Jesus Christ? Three Paschal feasts were celebrated in the course of it,² and it must therefore have occupied two and a half years. If next we attempt to put the events in their proper dates and to show a progress, a development, in the ministry of Jesus Christ, we must still address ourselves to the fourth Gospel.

The first three group the facts without the slightest hint of progress or development; but, on the other hand, we find in them, especially in the Gospel of Mark, notes of time which grow out of the nature of the events, and these indications of time impress themselves upon the reader all the more strongly because the Evan-

¹ 1 Pet. v. 12.

² John ii. 23; vi. 4; xiii. 1.

gelist had no thought of indicating them, and were themselves not aware of them.

Thus there is a moment in Jesus Christ's ministry — a "turning-point," as the Germans say — which marks very nearly the middle of his public life, and which is indicated in all the four Gospels.¹ It is the moment when the people turn away from Jesus Christ, when he loses the popularity which up to that time he had enjoyed. It is precisely a year before his death; for this event followed the multiplication of the loaves, which St. John expressly places in the neighborhood of a Passover which can only have been that of the year 29.²

Consequently, the ministry of Jesus Christ is to be divided into three parts; or, more correctly speaking, there are three periods of undeniable authenticity in the ministry of Jesus Christ,—

I. The Galilean Ministry (preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom; the Beatitudes; the visit to Nazareth; the parables

¹ Matt. xvi.; Mark viii.; Luke ix.; John vi.

² "Can only have been," on the supposition that Jesus was crucified in the year 30,—a very possible date, but concerning the accuracy of which a degree of doubt exists.

of the Kingdom of Heaven; teachings and cures). This first period is characterized by the lively enthusiasm which Jesus inspired, and the great popularity which he enjoyed. His ministry opened in hope and joy. He was encircled with universal sympathy. He went up and down the country performing miracles of benevolence, attacking the official representatives of the theocracy; and the multitudes approved. He replied to the messengers of John the Baptist, and pronounced upon him a decisive judgment. He proclaimed the freedom of the conscience. This period terminates with the discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount, in which are collected a large proportion of the discourses spoken during this time. The choice of the twelve apostles marks its close.

II. The second period of Jesus' ministry now opens. It began with the open hostility of the Pharisees, who accuse him of casting out demons by Beelzebub. Jesus in his turn rebukes the Pharisees, and parts company with them. Soon the people also cease to understand him, and abandon him. By one of those changes of mood common to crowds, a reaction takes

place. The popularity of Jesus suddenly wanes. The people accuse him of having trifled with their Messianic hopes. This crisis occurs precisely a year before Jesus' death.

This second period is better known than the preceding one, — that of favor and success, which is somewhat enshrouded in obscurity and hesitation. These are its principal events: Jesus publicly breaks with the Jewish Messianic hopes; learning of the death of John the Baptist, and feeling himself watched by Herod, he retires into solitude, and begins his ministry of wandering, often going beyond the limits of Herod's territory (Tyre, Sidon, Cæsarea Philippi), and entering upon a life of greater intimacy with his apostles. This second period closes with the confession of Peter, and the first prediction of his own nearly approaching death by violence. These are the facts, the exterior events. To these exterior events correspond interior events in the soul of Jesus. The conviction dawns upon him that his work is not to be accomplished by words and miracles, and that his death is probably necessary to the coming of the kingdom. We say probably, for even while affirming that his

death was inevitable he hoped to the end that his Father would spare him this sacrifice. But he clearly saw that the conversion of his people was not to be secured simply by the means which up to this time he had employed. He was obliged to give up the hope of accomplishing the pure spiritualization of Judaism as certain of the Pharisees understood it. He himself gave up his Judaism, and became in the most absolute sense unsectarian. He was no longer to be simply the spiritual and moral Messiah who was born in the days of the temptation in the desert; he was to be the suffering Messiah, sealing his work by martyrdom. His death was to precede the coming of the kingdom, which he still continued to proclaim near at hand.

III. The third period may be entitled The Final Struggle and the Last Week.¹ We shall study it in our third volume. It is the best-known period of Jesus' life. The light which authentic documents shed upon his life, a light which from the beginning grows ever stronger, is for these last days as perfect as could be desired.

¹ Matt. xx.-xxviii.; Mark x.-xvi.; Luke ix. 53-xxiv.; John vii.-xx.

JESUS CHRIST
HIS PERSON, HIS AUTHORITY, HIS
WORK

Part Second

JESUS CHRIST DURING HIS MINISTRY

CHAPTER I

THE EARLIER ACTIVITY OF JESUS

OUR first volume brought events down to the time when Jesus, at about thirty years of age, began his ministry. Still thrilling through and through with the burning words of John the Baptist, and the solemn refrain of his preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” he began by repeating these words, and for the time he said no others.

But it was not at Nazareth that he was to preach what he already called the “gospel,” — the good news, that is, — the coming renovation of things, prepared for by a change in men’s hearts and lives. In Nazareth he had no authority: he had been known there from childhood, and “no man is a prophet in his own country.” And, besides, he would there remain unknown. Nazareth is hidden away in the

hills ; he needed a centre from which to radiate into the far distance. Therefore he chose Capernaum, deciding that this village should be the point of departure for his preaching, his calls to his people. The choice was, no doubt, the result of careful investigation on his part. He might have stationed himself elsewhere ; but remaining in Galilee, giving up for the outset the idea of Jerusalem,¹ he could be nowhere better placed than in Capernaum. He certainly knew this town and all the lake shore, and in his youth he had often taken the six or seven hours' walk which separated Nazareth from the Sea of Galilee.

He decided, therefore, to leave the place where he had always lived. The rupture was certainly painful. This village where he had grown up was entwined with memories not merely of his childhood, but of all his youth and his life up to the age of thirty. It is true that these memories were of mingled character. His mother did not understand him ; his brothers dis-

¹ "For the outset," because his first attempts upon Jerusalem had not succeeded. See, further, Chapter VIII, "Journeys to Jerusalem."

approved of him; James especially, — the austere, strict, fastidious Jew, — who was nearly of his own age, must have looked upon him as a prodigal son, and later, when he became aware of Jesus' breadth of view, his heresies, his violation of the Sabbath, would suspect him of madness. But this was of minor importance; for Jesus to leave Nazareth, to go away, was to break with all that he had dearest in the world.

On leaving Nazareth the road ascends, and the view opens more and more widely. The culminating point of the way is one of the highest in all Galilee. Jesus could see immense regions spread out around him, and in the distance Mount Hermon, eternally white, towering above the lower mountains, whose large undulations descend toward the Sea of Tiberias, still invisible, hidden behind its terraced hills. When at last it comes into view, it is a sheet of grayish blue, seen only in glimpses against the distant background, and gradually coming more clearly into view. From these high points might be seen on its banks cities, villages, — white houses,

cubes of masonry in great number, far away and very low, as upon a map.

Galilee in that time was throbbing with intense life; and when one sees it to-day so gray and dead, the contrast is poignant. When Jesus from the top of the hills first saw the lake, he saw at the same time Tiberias, Magdala, Bethsaida, and numberless barks skimming the water. Into the midst of this simple and artless population, he was about to bring his new ideas,—the preaching of John the Baptist, and still other things; all that was fermenting in his soul, all that for eighteen years had been working in his mind and drawing him on, and all that he was shortly to add to this; for his thought was on the march, and every day some new horizon would open before him, and he would better understand the Father's will. His meat was to do that will, and thus to accomplish his work.

In going to Capernaum he did not take Tiberias in his way. This idolatrous or would-be idolatrous city, peopled with pagans and foreigners, inspired in him the aversion with which it inspired every loyal and patriotic Israelite. He went

directly to the lake, and then walked along its banks;¹ and it was there that he met his first friends — perhaps by appointment, — two brothers, Simon and Andrew, and farther on two other brothers, James and John. These four young men, particularly the last two, his own cousins, were to stand to him in the place of his family, and would never again leave him. John had already known him for a long time, had loved and followed him, and was united to Jesus in a close and tender friendship. He also had felt the influence of the Baptist, had been his disciple; and already for years, no doubt, Jesus and John had thought together, studied together, understood and found light together. Alone of the apostles at the foot of the cross, it would be for him to take the place of son to the mother of the Crucified One.

Capernaum and its neighboring villages, Bethsaida and Chorazin, were to be the favorite haunts of Jesus, and this corner of the earth's surface was to become the cradle of Christianity and of the world. New ideas were soon to be fermenting there.

¹ Mark i. 16; Matt. iv. 18.

At Capernaum the house of Simon and Andrew, both of them sons of a certain Johanan, became the first shelter and abode of Jesus. Soon, thanks to a common purse, which he established after the Essenian custom, he rented a house, — one of those mean dwellings, low-roofed and windowless, in which people only spend the night. It was not in the house that he spoke, but in the open air, on the shore of the lake, the plashing of whose harmless wavelets was far too gentle to stifle his voice. More or less everywhere on the lake-shore Jesus taught. The crowds listened standing on the shores ; the fishermen brought their boats to the very margin of the grass to listen, while he, seated in the boat of Simon Cephas, pronounced a few beatitudes or related a parable. Water-fowl swam around the boat ; the sky quivered with light, and the waves came softly up to die upon pebble and sand, amid the grass and the flowers.

The stones of the shore which travellers to-day tread under foot have heard his words, but we can hear them only through his disciples. He preached the gospel of the early days, adding to the preaching of

John the Baptist the announcement of the Father's love and universal brotherhood. He proclaimed pardon and infinite mercy at a time when men knew only laws of blood and vengeance, gods of gloom and jealousy ; and he who thus spoke belonged to Israel, that is to say, to the most exclusive race of all antiquity. And it was the very gospel, the good news, which he brought to earth, the best which it had ever heard or will ever hear. Now, this fact is not to be explained ; and he who does not here admit a revelation, and persists in saying this is an inexplicable enigma, seems indeed to be wilfully closing his eyes to historic evidence, superabundantly demonstrated.

At other times Jesus went about the country, passing through the admirably cultivated plain of Genesareth, which lay pent up between the sea and the mountains, and crossed by the road from Jerusalem to Damascus, — the road which St. Paul journeyed over a few hours before his conversion, and where caravans were unceasingly passing. This plain was a paradise, an enchanted garden filled with trees and flowers.

But let no one believe in what has been called the Galilean idyl. Jesus found himself everywhere surrounded with great suffering, and he was constantly moved with compassion. If he preached, it was because he had a mission to fulfil. It is certain that he had not earlier begun his ministry because he had been waiting for a divine call. Now he had heard it; God had spoken to him in his baptism. He was speaking to him every day; and the most profound sentiment in Jesus' heart was the desire to accomplish the work of God, the work which the Father had given him to do. Now he was carried out of himself in compassion for his whole people. His will, always sincere, firm, and when the time came heroic, was henceforth the steadfast will of that which is good, or, rather, of that which is God's will. Is it too daring to assume that the first two petitions of the prayer which he taught his disciples were in those days constantly upon his lips because they had been constantly in his heart during the years which immediately preceded his public life, years of pondering and waiting, and that they were more than ever in his heart and on his lips at the pre-

cise moment when he went to live in Capernaum, — “Father, hallowed be thy name!” “Thy kingdom come!” Two sentiments were dominant in him, — an intense and tender compassion for the moral and material wretchedness which surrounded him, and a communion with God which sustained and carried him without the slightest faltering. God was there, — he felt him, heard him, lived with and in him ; and this union with the Father was the source of a deep peace and an immense joy which sometimes thrilled through him and filled him utterly.

An itinerant Essene in his manners, a liberal Pharisee in his ideas, — such Jesus appears to us all through this first period of his activity. During these first months of his ministry he remained in the great current of the best Pharisaic doctrines, not separating himself from Judaism. His object was to prepare by his preaching for the coming of the kingdom, and he firmly hoped to be recognized and hailed as Messiah by the people ; and, above all, by their leaders, the Pharisees.

He lived in the Essenean way, but he did not conduct himself as an Essene toward

those who approached him. The people who hung upon his footsteps often made, indeed, a very motley company. Among them were individuals with whom respectable persons did not associate;¹ and while the Essene would have held himself to be contaminated if he had been touched by a person less strict than himself, Jesus, by way of protest against such narrowness, dined with these pariahs, and declared that he was come to seek sinners.²

Thus he went from village to village, accepting hospitality, or even taking it, according to custom. A guest had much authority in those days. The master of the house placed himself at his service, and showed him great confidence. Thus it was that the first propagation of the gospel was made by fireside preaching.

Rabbi Jehoshua would enter, pronounce a few words of greeting, relate one or two allegorical stories. The women would leave their work, and seat themselves at his feet according to Oriental custom; the children would run to see and be blessed by the journeying Rabbi. In the evening

¹ Matt ix. 10 f.; Luke xv.

² Matt. ix. 11 f.; Mark ii. 16 ff.; Luke v. 30 ff.

they would bring to him the sick persons of the town, for every Rabbi was a doctor ; he would give them counsel and heal them. He revealed to them the pearl of great price ; he brought the hidden treasure ; every one was touched and moved, many declared themselves for him. They said : “ What authority ! what power ! what new teaching ! ” On the morrow the same scenes would be repeated in the next village. Many details are thus explained by Oriental customs. Jesus said that the laborer was worthy of his hire, and his hire was the hospitality which he received. To lodge with a citizen was a sort of public right, for there were hostellries only in the large cities.

But Capernaum remained his centre. Its name signifies “ small town ” (*caphar*, village). Jesus loved it much.¹ On Saturdays especially he made a point of teaching in its synagogue. During the week he went about in the country among the scattered population.

The synagogue lent itself admirably to his purpose. The service was open to the public, who might make objections and put

¹ Matt. ix. 1; Mark ii. 1.

questions to the speaker. A certain disorder reigned there, and there was no solemnity. People conversed, observed one another, put questions to one another. At times the discussions were very animated. For example, there were questions of precedence that made a great stir in this little world. Men wanted the first place, the highest seat. Nothing in the synagogues resembled the silence which reigns in Christian churches, and which we call respect for the holy place.

In consequence, for Jesus to address the meeting or offer himself as reader, gave him an admirable opportunity to make known his mission. His agreement with the Pharisees, who, however, were not numerous in Galilee, was complete. He himself was most fully persuaded that he was in the true line of good Pharisaism. He was found to speak well, and was greatly admired.¹

His field of action was in all very limited. Jesus hardly went beyond the sort of gulf which the lake forms between Tiberias and the mouth of the Jordan, a

¹ Matt. vii. 28, xiii. 54; Mark i. 22, vi. 2; Luke iv. 22, 32.

curve of three leagues. It begins with rocks at the exit from Tiberias; then a plain opens out,—the land of Genesareth, of which we have spoken. In it lies the village of Magdala.

At the end of the plain is a road cut out of the rock, which still exists, and which Jesus surely often followed; then comes Capernaum, and in its neighborhood Dalmanutha, Bethsaida, Chorazin, lost cities whose site will be forever unknown.

These villages were densely populated; their inhabitants were fishermen, worthy and peaceable men, not without intelligence and even refinement, but densely ignorant, and with a very incomplete Jewish education. They were sufficiently well to do, and though not of pure race, like the Jews of Jerusalem, they had no Greek blood. Among these people Jesus recruited his first disciples, who, however, continued to work at their fisher's calling.¹ Later he would choose twelve disciples. He had not yet thought of doing so; but we have already seen four of them,—John and James, Peter and Andrew,—who, especially the first three, were to

¹ Matt. iv. 18; Mark i. 16; Luke v. 3; John xxi. 3.

form an inner circle of friends and preferred disciples.

All these people lived a life very different from our own, a life of which it is almost impossible for us to form a just idea. With us existence is a struggle; with them there was no need to fight for life. They had no necessities to satisfy: they required little food, and were content with anything. There were no rigors of climate,—nature was generous; and as they were seldom in the house, they felt no need that their homes should be beautiful. The earliest disciples who surrounded the Master formed a group of confiding friends, living from day to day, laying up nothing in store, since the kingdom of God was at hand, and asking nothing more than the morrow's bread.

They were poor, and yet happy: as they possessed nothing, no one could deprive them of anything; they were therefore without care, and suffered no privation. With us, the poor man has much difficulty in making for himself his small place in the sunshine. There the poor enjoyed the flowers, the shade,—all nature, which was theirs as much as any-

body's. The thought of communism came naturally to the mind, — not in order that every one should be rich; quite the contrary. "Riches are an evil thing," they would say; "poverty is a good. It is best to give away the little that one has. Neither liberty nor happiness depends on what one has or has not." These doctrines were in the air. In the preaching of those days Jesus would speak of them, and he already practised Essenian communism. One disciple had charge of the common purse; it was replenished by gifts brought by the new members or by some who were richer than the others. Among those who heard the teachings of Jesus were some who were led to the point of giving up everything and leaving all things to follow him, solemnly promising never to leave him!

How little all this was in appearance! How humble and small it all was! A few dreamy and ignorant Oriental souls, knowing nothing either of the size of the world or the political power of the Cæsars, nothing of the most elementary philosophy or of the law of the universe; expecting the kingdom and seeing everywhere the

signs of its approach ; believing that heaven is above, and hell below, and the earth in the middle. And these souls were unsettled, disquieted, half unbelieving, even in the things that they knew and believed. And when one thinks that it is they who have transmitted Jesus to us, that we know Jesus only through their instrumentality, and that the little that they have told us of him, so imperfectly and incompletely, has overturned and changed the world ; when one realizes that it is by what they have said that we live and die (for the gospel is the best that men have by which to learn to live well and die well), and that no one has found anything else, that we cannot do without it,— then the teaching of Jesus, his word, his person, all his being, expand to inconceivable proportions, and the certitude of a divine message, a divine revelation, a word come down from heaven, and a being come down from heaven, forces itself upon us, dominates us, overwhelms us with its evidence.

For, after all, everything comes from him, — our laws, our morals, our civilization, all our wisdom and our newest ideas ; and those who reject Jesus, blaspheme

and deny him, still are subject to his influence, and in spite of themselves in one relation or another remain his disciples ; and, on the other hand, misguided Christians, full of intolerance and fanaticism, orthodox hypocrites and the proud of all denominations, and the priests of all communions, also exalt him, since they call themselves by his name ; and it is even the ease that those who senselessly throw down his cross, thinking themselves to be working for liberty and truth, are often impelled into error by an unrecognized motive of generosity, which by that very quality has its roots in the evangelical and Christian spirit.

Whatever, then, may be one's judgment of the Gospels and their authenticity, it remains true that there was a personality of incomparable power concerning whom these books were composed. The whole sum of facts and ideas connected with Jesus, which caused the creation of the Church, the activity of the apostles, the enthusiasm of the early martyrs, proves the appearance in the first century of a being whose influence upon those who knew and loved him was colossal.

CHAPTER II

THE LANGUAGE OF JESUS

JESUS wrote nothing, and he appears not to have taken the smallest precaution to secure the preservation of his words. This was perfectly natural. No one in the Jewish world of Palestine had his mind turned to the composing of books. Why write them? The world was about to come to an end; and, in fact, the Apocalypses, which are the only remaining Palestinian works of that time, are short tracts solely designed to describe the end of all things and prepare men's minds for the final catastrophe.

People also wrote letters, but only occasionally. St. Paul did not compose one line for the future; he wrote not one word with the intention that it should last. He was too well convinced that he was living in the last days of history. As to the Gospels, it was not until much later that

men thought of composing them. To write was to will to preserve, to take thought for the morrow. Certainly Jesus took thought for the future of his work, but it was by committing it to the apostles; and he seems not to have considered that the apostles themselves might have need to confide it to those who should succeed them.

How did the apostles retain the memory of Jesus' words? How were his words preserved intact, after being for a long time transmitted from lip to lip, no one so much as thinking of fixing them by writing? Simply by one of those feats of memory which the scarcity of manuscripts made an absolute necessity. The preservation of the maxims of the Rabbis in the Talmud offers precisely the same phenomenon; and this explanation is the right one, because it is the only one possible, and there is not the slightest doubt that the sayings of Jesus have come down to us in their authentic form.

His sayings have so peculiar a turn, so original a character, that no one can mistake them, and one can easily authenticate the very special form which he gave to his

thought; we may almost speak of the style of Jesus as if he had himself held the pen. And yet he not only wrote nothing, but we have not even his words in the language in which they were spoken. We have said that one of the apostles made a collection of the sayings of Jesus in the original tongue, and that this collection is lost. Yet, notwithstanding this loss, we can still judge of the form which Jesus gave his thought, so forcible and characteristic is the imprint which his personality put upon the least of his utterances. Each one of them is in some way inimitable, of an unique originality. The words of Jesus are certainly his own, and can be those of no other. Hillel, the elder Gamaliel, Shammai, also wrote nothing; and perhaps by collecting the authentic maxims of each of these doctors, one might characterize their method of teaching and the form which they gave to their aphorisms. At all events, it can be done in the case of Jesus.

It is true that as soon as the form is in question, we must set aside the long discourses of the fourth Gospel, for, as is generally admitted, these discourses are

given to us in a language peculiar to the author of the book. If the thought is that of Jesus, the style is not his. We have therefore not to speak of them here.¹

As to the Synoptics, they reproduce with admirable fidelity the very expressions used by Jesus. Still, I should not dare to say that the long discourses are textual. I do not believe that Jesus spoke in very long discourses. He developed little, and the brevity of his utterances, the clearness of his judgments, show that he sought above all things precision in conciseness. His style is eminently the lapidary's style. He spoke in short paragraphs, which, being brought together, formed the discourses which we find in the Gospels. The Sermon on the Mount, for example, was put together by tradition; its different parts are not necessarily connected, and this sermon was never pronounced just as it stands. It is simply a summing up of Jesus' mode of teaching during a certain period of his ministry. Jesus did like all the Rabbis, none of whom was an orator

¹ Nevertheless there are to be found in the fourth Gospel a number of sayings of Christ of which the form is precisely that which the first three give.

in the modern sense of the word,—one who aims at eloquence.

The Rabbis, wandering Essenes or others, lived in small groups. No one among them wrote ; they conversed in public and among themselves ; they formulated their thoughts in short aphorisms easy to remember. These sentences might be either purely moral precepts, or interpretations of the Law, or even individual opinions on divers casuistical points. Jesus did like the others. He abolished nothing, he fulfilled ; and his aphorisms came from his lips in incomparable form, finished, perfect.

If he did not precisely preach sermons, it yet sometimes happened that he spoke long at a time ; but he did not set forth ideas logically linked together according to a plan thought out and fixed in advance. The custom of the Rabbis was to express themselves either in clear, well-defined sentences which left no doubt of their signification, or, on the contrary, in enigmatical utterances which excited attention by the desire to find their meaning, which they aroused. Jesus, whose words were often fragmentary, made use of both forms ; with them he clothed entirely new ideas,

and gave them an expression of finished perfection.¹

Searching thus for the most exact term, the most striking word, the best figure, Jesus came to employ unique expressions with precision and truth. He gave to the idea its final form. I will cite only one example. The Pharisees had often spoken of Providence before Jesus began to teach, but faith in Providence became definitive only on the day when he said, "Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without your Father;"² "The hairs of your head are all numbered."³

He adopted for his sententious utterances two forms particularly well adapted to engrave them upon the memory, and of these he was very fond,—antithesis and paradox.

¹ We do not mean to say that Jesus never spoke except in this manner. There were in his discourses, especially toward the close of his ministry, passages of sublime tone, whose elevation recalls and surpasses the most magnificent apostrophes of the old Prophets, and which have no relationship with the brief and somewhat dry maxims of the Doctors of the first century. But it is certain that we have in the short, precise sentence one of the forms which by preference Jesus gave to his thought.

² Matt. x. 29; Luke xii. 6.

³ Matt. x. 30; Luke xii. 7.

Antithesis is continually in his mouth. For examples of it, one might cite more than half his teachings. Paradox, which excites and sustains the attention, is also frequent: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath."¹ "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his own father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."² "Rejoice and be exceeding glad," in persecution.³ "I am not come to bring peace, but a sword."⁴ "He that is not for me is against me."⁵ Sometimes it is only an exaggeration,—the faith which moves mountains,⁶ the camel that passes through the eye of a needle.⁷ He also liked plays upon words: "Thou art *Peter*, and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church."⁸ "He who will save his life shall lose it. He who will lose it for my sake shall save it."⁹ "Let

¹ Matt. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25. ² Luke xiv. 26.

³ Matt. v. 12; Luke vi. 23.

⁴ Matt. x. 34; Luke xii. 51.

⁵ Matt. xii. 30; Luke xi. 23. ⁶ Matt. xii. 21.

⁷ Matt. xix. 24; Mark x. 25; Luke xviii. 25.

⁸ Matt. xvi. 18.

⁹ Matt. xvi. 25; Mark viii. 35; Luke ix. 24, xvii. 33.

the dead bury their dead.”¹ The fishermen of the lake become “fishers of men.”²

By all these methods, designed to attract attention, Jesus shows himself the ingenious Rabbi, knowing how to captivate his hearers, to aid their memory, provoke their reflection; and always with a marvellous simplicity.

It often happened that he put his maxims into figurative form; for example, “The lamp of the body is the eye.”³ Figurative language was in fact the habitual and almost constant form of his thought. He seldom made use of abstract terms. His incessant endeavor was to be understood by his hearers. He puts himself at their level; he varies his utterances; sometimes he gives striking examples; sometimes he uses words so simple as to be almost infantine; sometimes the expressions are half veiled; everywhere his object is the same,—to awake attention and gain souls. It is the picture that dominates; from the simple illustration of his thought by an expressive word to the long enigmatic parables, he always speaks in pictures, and

¹ Matt. viii. 22; Luke ix. 60. ² Luke v. 10.

³ Luke xi. 34.

best of all he loves to put warnings in this form.¹

Comparisons, properly so called, by which he reproves, censures, exhorts, are very numerous.² In this method we must see one of the secrets of his authority. Jesus shows and does not demonstrate. He proposes divine verities, certain that that which is right and true will prove itself by showing itself. This again is one of the reasons for the sententious and axiomatic form in which he continually expresses himself. Finally, when the thought which he is about to give out appears to him particularly important, he precedes it with the words, *Amen! Amen!* that is, *Verily! Verily!*

It is needless to say that this perfection of form was not improvised. We said in our first volume that Jesus must have prepared himself to speak in public. If he certainly applied to himself his precept, “Be not anxious what ye shall say, for the

¹ Matt. v. 25, vii. 3, 10, ix. 16, 17, xxiv. 45; Luke viii. 16, xi. 33, xiv. 7-11, xviii. 9-14, xiv. 28-33, xvii. 7-9.

² Matt. v. 13, 14, vi. 22, xi. 16-17; Mark iv. 26-29; Matt. xiii.

Holy Ghost will show you how ye ought to speak,"¹ none the less did he carefully prepare certain parts of his teaching. The Lord's Prayer must have been the result of a preparation like that which the Pharisees made for the prayers which they composed for the use of their disciples. John the Baptist too composed a prayer for his disciples.

To represent the form of Jesus' teaching as spontaneous is either to believe it to have been fortuitous or else to make of it a mechanical revelation, a dictation of the Holy Spirit, as people used formerly to suppose was the case with the books of the Bible. The form which Jesus gave his utterances was predetermined; he had reflected upon it; with wonderful tact he had put in operation the gifts which God had given him. Compare his figures with those of his brother James. What a resemblance and what a difference! Resemblance, for of all the Biblical writings, James's style most nearly resembles his, which is not surprising, since they were brothers. But yet what a difference between them! The passage in James about the tongue,² to

¹ Mark xiii. 11; Matt. x. 19; Luke xii. 11.

² James iii. 1-12.

cite only this one, is full of insufficient metaphors, accumulated images, tasteless and too abundant. With Jesus the image is perfect, always lofty, always adequate. His language is indeed that of the Orient, but without one of those incoherences which are so constant with Orientals, and with which they concern themselves so little. Jesus was concerned to find the finished form as well as all the rest.

Thus the parables, with their rich teachings, in which so many details are intentional and have their signification, were certainly not improvised. On the contrary, they are composed with consummate art. We may say of them that they have not a word too much or too little. Clearness, simplicity, conciseness, are what distinguish them. The naturally figurative turn of Jesus' thought found in these little stories its natural expression. People say that the parable was already in use among the Orientals. That is true of the Hindoos, but it is not entirely true of the Jews. The figurative stories of the Old Testament¹ have only an external resemblance to the parables of Jesus Christ.

¹ Jud. ix. 8 ff.; 2 Sam. xii. 1 ff.

Still, the Rabbis of his time did make use of this mode of teaching. The Talmud cites a considerable number of the parables of Hillel and Shammai. Jesus did like them.

It is interesting to remark that he did not begin by relating parables. In his mode of speech he made development, as in all the rest. The Sermon on the Mount, that is to say, the beatitudes, the laws and promises of the coming kingdom, precepts easy to understand, figures of an extreme simplicity, like that of the mote and the beam,¹ of agreeing with the opposing party,² grapes gathered from thorns and figs from thistles,³ the houses built either on the rock or the sand,⁴—such was the first form of imagery in the teachings of Jesus. They are nothing more than metaphors; they are not yet true parables. The first of the parables properly so called are those of the kingdom. There remain to us eight of them: 1. The sower;⁵ 2. the wheat and the tares;⁶ 3. the grain of

¹ Matt. vii. 3.

² Matt. v. 25.

³ Matt. vii. 16.

⁴ Matt. vii. 24-27.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 4 ff.; Mark iv. 3 ff.; Luke viii. 5 ff.

⁶ Matt. xiii. 24 ff.

mustard seed;¹ 4. the seed thrown into the ground;² 5. the leaven;³ 6. the treasure hidden in the field;⁴ 7. the pearl of great price;⁵ 8. the net cast into the sea.⁶ Here Jesus draws almost all his comparisons from nature. His parable has already its finished, perfected form. It is a little drama, with its dénouement, a true fiction, but one that never transcends historic probability.

At a later time Jesus changed both the form and the matter of his parables. He borrowed his comparisons from man himself, and the most profound feelings of his soul. Furthermore, he did not always give a symbolic example, but simply gave an example to avoid. Sixteen of the parables of this second period have come down to us: 1. The two debtors;⁷ 2. the unforgiving servant;⁸ 3. the good Samaritan;⁹ 4. the friend coming at midnight;¹⁰ 5. the man whose fields had brought forth much;¹¹ 6. the marriage supper;¹² 7. the

¹ Matt. xiii. 31 ff.; Mark iv. 30 ff.

² Mark iv. 26 f. ³ Matt. xiii. 33.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 44.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 45 f.

⁶ Matt. xiii. 47 f.

⁷ Luke vii. 40 ff.

⁸ Matt. xviii. 23 ff.

⁹ Luke x. 25 f.

¹⁰ Luke xi. 5 f.

¹¹ Luke xii. 16 f.

¹² Luke xii. 35 f.

barren fig-tree;¹ 8. the great supper;² 9. the lost sheep;³ 10. the lost drachma;⁴ 11. the prodigal son;⁵ 12. the unjust steward;⁶ 13. Lazarus and the rich man;⁷ 14. the unjust judge;⁸ 15. the Pharisee and the Publican;⁹ 16. the laborers in the vineyard.¹⁰ At the close of his ministry Jesus resumed his parabolical teachings about the kingdom of God. There remain to us six prophetic similitudes of this epoch, of which we shall speak in our third volume; in them Jesus announces his return and the last judgment: 1. The talents,¹¹ or the minæ; ¹² 2. the two sons;¹³ 3. the husbandmen;¹⁴ 4. the marriage of the king's son;¹⁵ 5. the ten virgins;¹⁶ 6. the sheep and the goats.¹⁷

The parabolic teaching of Jesus has an extreme importance; we believe that it is in the parable that we must search

¹ Luke xiii. 6 f.

² Luke xiv. 15 f.

³ Matt. xviii. 12 f.; Luke xv. 3 f. ⁴ Luke xv. 8 f.

⁵ Luke xv. 11 f.

⁶ Luke xvi. 1 f.

⁷ Luke xvi. 19 f.

⁸ Luke xviii. 1 f.

⁹ Luke xviii. 9 f.

¹⁰ Matt. xx. 1 f.

¹¹ Matt. xxv. 14 f.

¹² Luke xix. 12 f.

¹³ Matt. xi. 28 f.

¹⁴ Matt. xxi. 33 f.; Mark xii. 1 f.; Luke xx. 9 f.

¹⁵ Matt. xx. 1 f.

¹⁶ Matt. xxv. 1 f.

¹⁷ Matt. xxv. 3 f.

for the real matter of his thought. When he had reflected at length upon a subject and had arrived at a clear and definite idea, the evolution of his thought having reached its outcome, he composed a parable by which he gave a finished and complete form to a doctrine equally finished and complete. Thus it is that, after having for a long time taught that the Heavenly Father pardons those who pardon, remits the sins of whosoever consents to overlook the sins that have been committed against him, he composed the parable of the unforgiving servant, which expresses in picturesque form his true doctrine on this important subject. Hence it results that to know the final thought of Jesus we must study his parables, and that by placing them as much as possible at their true date, we get a veritable history of his religious ideas.

Let us now seek to determine the true character of the form given by Jesus to his teaching. It seems to us that it may be defined by the word "spiritualization." He fulfills the past by transforming it, and this simply by the power of his own spiritual life. Jesus, by his ideas, his

knowledge, his language, is of his own time and country. But in him there reigns an intense religiosity, a profound and unalterable sense of the continual presence of God, which transforms everything, sees through everything, and gives to each a special reality and value.

He has no preconceived ideas, whether critical, literary, historical, or metaphysical. He has nothing to do with such things. He makes no use of the distinctions of modern thought, and he accepts all the concrete and realistic terms of his time and people. He accepts, without the least idea that it is open to discussion, all that relates to angels and Satan. He admits the fact of demoniac possession; he could not do other than admit it, or he would not be of his own time. The same may be said of eschatological notions and of all the old Judaism. It comes from God, he says; the Torah is the code of a divine religion. But he spiritualizes everywhere, because his religious consciousness is always alive, and it assimilates the contents of the book only by virtue of its affinity with the contents. If a text has authority with him by virtue of *It is written*, and that

because he is a Jew and of his time, the text also and especially enjoys a higher authority, that which it holds in virtue of the sentiment which it expresses. To his mind the arbitrary precepts of the Law undoubtedly came from God as well as all the others, and yet he pays no attention to them because he sums up the whole Law in love to God and to one's neighbor.

This continual spiritualization is, then, the proper character of Jesus' language. If the maxim "The style is the man" is not always true, it is absolutely so of Jesus, because there is an entire harmony between his thought and the language of which he made use in expressing it. This is why the study of Jesus' method of teaching has an exceptional importance, which springs out of the very heart of his teaching.

Jesus had not a doctrine like the philosophers, like Plato or Aristotle. He did not come to demonstrate new truths as destined to supersede the old truths; but he did come to draw a new life out of the old forms, while keeping the forms such as they had been; and his language was always thoroughly Judaic and Oriental,

although we hear it only through the Greek translations of the disciples.

Such, then, was the language of Jesus, and such were the beginnings of that ministry which was so soon to end in the disaffection of the multitude, the hatred of the Pharisees, unpopularity. It began in hope and joy. Jesus by his word exercised an extraordinary, an immense, ascendancy over the people. His renown was great, and the sympathy of the multitudes became absolutely his.

If it was a limited circle in which he was active, if he was almost unknown in Jerusalem, still his Galilean discourses were fully accepted and aroused general approbation. His only weapon was the word, inviting the consent of the heart. No doubt he attacked the official representatives of Judaism, but the people approved, and true Pharisees approved also.

What a unique appearance was that of this gentle and compassionate Rabbi, — a sort of Pharisee, to be sure, but a very new, very liberal Pharisee, who spiritualized everything he said, and transformed everything he touched! A sort of Essene, no doubt, but only in appearance, for no one

was more irreconcilably than he the adversary of narrow legalism and exterior purifications.

We picture to ourselves the Master and his disciples going about in Galilee, or perhaps in the common room of their little house; there they sit after the Eastern manner, squatting close together upon a rug, turban on head, and wrapped about with their long mantles. Sometimes they talk and put questions one to another: sometimes after a long silence Jesus slowly utters a sententious saying and then is again silent. The disciples, with eyes half closed and intent manner, listen and remember. Their impeccable, faultless memories will never lose a word. The Master's utterance is now as if graven on their hearts; more than that, it may well be that he will often repeat it. At last the Master speaks again; this time to whisper softly the explanation of the parable which a little while before he had spoken at the lakeside, under the brilliant light of the noonday sun; and he adds, "What I say unto you in secret, that proclaim upon the housetops."¹

¹ Matt. x. 27; Luke xii. 3.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLIEST TEACHINGS OF JESUS

JESUS began his work as a Rabbi, as an itinerant preacher, as a physician of soul and body; such were already a certain number of his contemporaries. One is at first tempted to say that there is nothing more than this in the words of Jesus and the acts which he did. He seemed to have no fixed plan. He lived from day to day. The cares of each day were sufficient for him; he performed the work which presented itself, replying to the questions that were asked him, and uttering the sayings which were suggested by the circumstances of the moment.

People often came to consult him, as they would have consulted a Doctor of the Law. He laid down the law; he spoke with authority: his opinions were good to know, and he gave his views exactly as Hillel or Shammai might have done and actually did.

He took his own wherever he found it. On the subject of divorce, for example, he ranged himself beside Shammai.¹ On other and more numerous points he holds rather the views of Hillel; thus what he says about justice,² which indeed is also to be found in Tobias,³ was one of Hillel's well-known formulas,⁴ and his words about judging, "Judge not, that ye be not judged,"⁵ were given by Hillel under this form: "Judge not thy neighbor until thou findest thyself in his position."⁶

Sometimes Jesus would reproduce what the Old Testament had already said; sometimes he would give a new opinion; but that which seems new to us was not always such, and no doubt it often occurred that he repeated words which he had heard in the synagogue.

He reprehended the law of retaliation; it would appear that no one had done so before him.⁷ He condemned usury.⁸ Deuteronomy had already condemned it,

¹ Matt. v. 31, 32; Luke xvi. 18.

² Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31.

³ Tob. i. 16.

⁴ Babyl. Talmud, *Shabbath*, 31 a.

⁵ Matt. vii. 1.

⁶ Vide Babyl. *Kethuboth*, 105 b.

⁷ Matt. v. 38.

⁸ Matt. v. 42.

but usage authorized it. He said that one should not make a display of devotion, like the Pharisees, — that one should perform his alms in secret;¹ it had already been said.² The maxim “If a man smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other”³ recalls a similar saying of Jeremiah;⁴ but the counsel to pluck out the eye and cut off the hand which cause to offend⁵ has nowhere an analogue, to our knowledge.

The duty of loving one’s enemies⁶ recalls similar words to be read in the Talmud,⁷ and it cannot be said that the Talmudists borrowed these passages from the Gospel, for a wall of separation was built up between the synagogue and the church down to the thirteenth century, and down to that epoch neither exercised any influence upon the other.

“Forgive and you shall be forgiven,” is

¹ Matt. vi. 1 ff.

² Eccles. xvii. 18, xxix. 15; Babyl. *Chagiga*, 5 a; *Bababathra*, 9 b. Cf. Isa. i. 11 f., lviii.; Hos. vi. 6; Mal. i. 10 f., which prepared the way for such precepts.

³ Matt. v. 39 f.; Luke vi. 29. ⁴ Lam. iii. 30.

⁵ Matt. v. 29–30, xviii. 9; Mark ix. 47, 48.

⁶ Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 27.

⁷ Babyl. *Shabbath*, 88 b.; *Joma*, 23 a.

in the Old Testament.¹ “Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful,” also recalls an almost identical rabbinical utterance ;² and upon almsgiving, pity, good works, kindness of heart, disinterestedness, the duty of seeking for peace, Jesus said only what the Old Testament had already said,³ and what the synagogue around him repeated, what he had heard from his childhood.⁴

He sanctified celibacy, as the Essenes did ; like them, he forbade oaths, and it is not to be doubted that he borrowed this interdiction from Essenism.

For that matter, this question was much discussed. Even those who allowed the oath recognized cases where it was to be forbidden. These cases were many ; still more numerous, however, were those where it was permitted. Under such circumstances it was an oath ; under such others it was not an oath, even though men had solemnly sworn.⁵

¹ Lev. xix. 18; Prov. xx. 22; Eccles. xxviii. 1 f.

² *Siphre*, 51 b.

³ Deut. xxiv., xxv., xxvi. etc.; Isa. lviii. 7; Prov. xix. 17; etc.

⁴ *Pirke Aboth*, 1 *Jerus. Peah*, i. 1; *Babyl. Shabbath*, 63 a.

⁵ Talmud, *Sheoloth*, ch. 3, 4; and *Berakoth*, fol. 55.

Jesus swept away all this casuistry by saying, "Swear not at all."¹ As to the law, it forbade only perjury.²

Jesus, then, was a Rabbi, and a Rabbi of his own time. Many of his precepts explain themselves when one puts himself into the surroundings in which they were spoken, and compares the identical words uttered by the Doctors of his time. The questions which were put to him at Jerusalem, in the Temple, in the very latest days of his life, concerning tribute, concerning marriage in the future life, those which he himself at that time asked concerning the Davidic origin of the Messiah, are samples of the questions which Pharisees of different shades of thought put to one another.

But when Jesus did not reply to the questions which were put to him as Rabbi, he was following his habitual method: to abolish nothing, to fulfil everything. He himself explained his attitude by the celebrated maxim, "Every scribe instructed in the things of the kingdom is like a man who is a householder, who bringeth

where are mentioned all the oaths touched upon by Jesus; the Temple, Jerusalem, are mentioned.

¹ Matt. v. 34.

² Lev. xix. 12 ff.

forth from his treasury things new and old.”¹ This expression, to be understood, should not be separated from that other formula, “Abolish nothing; fulfil all things.”

It is true that, at a first glance, one is tempted to believe that Jesus preached two classes of truths, — one of them ancient, taken from the Old Testament, which he cited just as they were, without change; the other new, discovered by himself, and more or less revolutionary. His teachings would in that case be a medley of ancient traditions which he thought worthy of preservation, and truths entirely unknown before his day, which he had drawn from his own resources; and in that case we, studying his teachings to-day, would have to perform a work of separation, saying of one precept, “it was new;” of another, “it was old;” here Jesus brought out original ideas, there ideas which were not original. In fact, a few moments ago we pointed out one and another gospel precept which has no analogue anywhere; and others which, on the contrary, were well known before Jesus’ time. But Jesus himself did not

¹ Matt. xiii. 52.

in the least do this, and we must interpret his saying about the man who brings forth from his treasury things new and old in this way: he had studied the religion of his people, their sacred books, and of this Old Testament, which — it must not be forgotten — he read through the medium of the theology of his time, he made a treasury. This treasury is therefore composed of things of the past, but it was Jesus who made it, and it was he who drew from it; and thus these antique truths, which were wholly old, became new when they had passed through the crucible of his personal experience and were uttered by him. They were at once old and new. It is the ancient heritage which he gave to his disciples, but not until he had transformed it; the old and the new are fused in a higher unity, nothing is abolished, all is fulfilled.

This method of Jesus is eternally true. At the present day, for example, Christian dogmatics ought to be transformed and entirely made over. It never will be done in a fruitful way unless Christians preserve all the past, blotting out not one of the old dogmas, those dogmas which

before their time were the spiritual and moral force of so many generations, but introducing into each one a new life, a vital principle, which will rejuvenate and transform it.

It is therefore an error to classify methodically the various points of the teachings of Jesus and find a system of doctrine in his words, — to say, for example, that he taught this about God, that about men. This is entirely to misunderstand the unique and essential character of Jesus' teaching, which was to preach his own person.¹ He tells us what he is, and gives himself out for just what he is. He reveals his soul. He tells what he feels, thinks, experiences, with an entire and absolute spontaneity and sincerity.

It is therefore impossible to put this teaching into formulas; it is necessary to rid ourselves of the idea that there is a doctrine of Jesus independent of his person. What Jesus taught was himself. He preached himself, — a thing that St. Paul would not do. For example, when Jesus taught that God is the Heavenly

¹ We shall return to this thought and develop it in our last chapter, "The Requirements of Jesus."

Father, he was not seeking to inculcate a doctrine of God. He did not give out any opinions about God, but he told what God was to him, and consequently what he is absolutely. He was possessed with an idea which was to him a certitude,—that God was in him, dwelt in him. He heard him, talked with him, and God's words went sounding through his soul; and this is why he preached himself and asked that others should give themselves to him.¹ From the beginning, and certainly for a long time before his public life, he had felt himself in close relations with God.

Jesus, then, preserved all the past; with regard to God, sin, man, the reign of God, he repeated what his contemporaries said. He drew everything from the Old Testament, and repeated Jewish doctrines pure and simple; but he repeated them otherwise than had been done before him, because he had made them new in his own consciousness.

More than this, he not only transformed these precepts, not only gave to them a value which makes them seem new, but he further, and especially, put them in

¹ Matt. ix. 9.

practice. Why, indeed, had not these maxims, which were already in the Law and on the lips of pious and sincere Pharisees,—why had they not changed the world, and how was it that Jesus changed it? Because Jesus was the first one to practise and live them. We may prove that the gospel morality was not itself very original, we may gather together the whole of it from ancient maxims; and yet it was only in the first century that these transformed the world, made it new, and actually recreated it. He not only gave the perfect code of the perfect life; he lived it. For this reason that in him which was striking, that which drew hearts to him, was not his charm, as has been said, but the perfection of his life,—the fact that he, first of all men, was perfect as the Father is perfect.

Let us be more circumstantial, studying at yet closer range the spirit of his teaching, comparing it with that of the men of his time.

The Scribes and Pharisees said that the Law was the final authority. In it God spoke. In the Torah was the exterior commandment, before the letter of which

all must bow. It was the word of God in the narrowest and strictest sense of the word. Jesus would certainly not have repudiated this statement. But what did the Scribes draw from it? A servile fear of violating a single one of these commandments; a subtle interpretation of the simplest texts; a multitude of precepts before which they continually trembled in the fear of violating them. Here Jesus parted company with them. He believed in the exterior authority of the Law, but he changed it to an interior authority. Even during his long years of silent obscurity he had begun to have sacred experiences; and one of them, the foundation of his religious certitude, was communion with God.

In the depths of his soul he had a secret conviction which was to be identified, which could not but be identified, with the commandments of the Law, because, like them, it spoke only the truth. He was assured of the approbation of his Father; and thus, when he was confronted by the Law, which also came from the Father, it was not a question of obeying precepts which threaten, command, forbid, like the slave

who knows not what his master does, and who obeys because his master is the strongest, but of keeping the Law by identifying it with the inward law, the law of conscience, the will of the Father. It was not, then, the exterior law to which man must submit, but the moral conscience regenerated and set free by the Father, who has mercy and forgives.

Jesus left on one side all which in the Law is literal application and minute casuistry; he paid no attention to it. It said nothing to him, because it remained outside of him, and those things which were neither felt nor experienced were as if non-existent. But he declared to be eternal all that is the will of God, all that his own soul revealed to him. He found in his soul the law of perfection. It was already in the Old Testament, "Be ye holy;" but he declared that it could not be accomplished simply by fulfilling the Mosaic laws. The sentiments of men's hearts must be changed. He rose from the act to the sentiment which dictated it; it was the sentiment which should be perfect. The thought of evil was as culpable as the evil itself; and thus he reached

a law as rigorous and as impossible to keep as that of the Old Testament, though for a different reason. "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees," he said to his hearers, "ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."¹ The commandment ceased to be limited by becoming an inward command. To be perfect as the Father is was what conscience demanded, and it could demand nothing less.

This transformation from the letter to the spirit, from the exterior to the inward law, from blind and trembling submission to free and joyful faith, led Jesus quite simply and naturally to an inevitable conclusion, which he early began to preach,—that rites have no importance. The Temple would pass away, and forms, which indeed had been inevitable, were nothing. No doubt he did not annul them; he abolished nothing. After his departure an entire wing of his Church continued to profess Judaism; the so-called Judaizing Christians went to synagogue and Temple, recited the Shema, and, when men expressed surprise at this, were able to an-

¹ Matt. v. 20.

swer, "Jesus did thus;" and it was true. To the end of his life Jesus went to the synagogue. He celebrated the Jewish Passover on the eve of his death. He did, indeed, institute Baptism and the Eucharist, but in the earlier days he said nothing about these. In his view, independence of conscience ought to be entire. Every man is responsible only to his inward guide. The religious and the moral life ought to act and react upon each other.

In the early days of his ministry, then, Jesus taught no religious practice. His religion consisted wholly in an immediate, personal relation between the soul and the Heavenly Father. He placed no intermediate clergy between God and the believer. He repudiated all forms which touched only the body.¹ He rejected tradition.

All this was not absolutely new. Simon the Just, Jesus ben-Sirach, and Hillel had already summed up the Law in the precept of righteousness. Philo had preached a high moral sanctity, and had held practices in slight esteem. Rabbi Johanan had put works of mercy above even the study of

¹ Matt. xv. 11 ff.; Mark vii. 6 ff.

the Law.¹ Jesus continued, completed, and went beyond these teachers. In his view, true worship consisted in having a pure heart and treating all men as brothers.² The act was of small importance; the important thing was the inward sentiment which inspired it. In this position he was no longer a Jew, for to the true Jew the rite was everything. Whatever might be the inward disposition, it was simply necessary to put oneself on right terms with God by performing the rite. No doubt Jesus said that the tithe must be paid, even "of mint and anise and cummin,"³ for the Law ordains it, and he never abolished one stroke of the letter of the Law; but he rejected the Pharisaic casuistry on the observation of the Sabbath, he did not abstain from certain meats, and he did not make a point of fasting. It was all one, whether or not one practised these external acts. He had no wish to make an abrupt change in common usage; he wished only to change men's hearts, secure, in advance, that when the heart was changed the external change would

¹ *Jerus. Peah.* i. 1.

² Cf. *Jas.* i. 27.

³ *Matt.* xxiii. 23.

follow of itself. He gave no decree doing away with one thing, retaining another, but he implanted the inward leaven which little by little would work through the dough, transforming it and making it a new material.

It is hard for us to enter into the spirit of such a work, because with our modern philosophical notions we can picture to ourselves only a pure reform of ideas and doctrines, a direct reformation. "This is true, do it; that is false, believe it no longer; replace it with this or that new belief." But Jesus was of his own time, and had nothing to do with ours. He was born a Jew; he was thoroughly religious, and imbued with theocratic notions. God was the master, he was the Messiah, and his purpose was to prepare for the coming of the Messianic kingdom. Now his people with their Law and their prophets were tending toward this kingdom. The theocracy of Israel would be perfected when the kingdom had come. The object to reach was its coming.

How could it be reached? By making an advance upon the past,—a step forward, but without rupture, and on the lines of

the past. Jesus was certain that the ancient Law had prepared for what he had come to do. The people also were preparing for the coming of the kingdom by the practice of the Law. And they must complete this preparation by continuing to practise it; but in order to complete and fulfil it they must go beyond the letter. The members of the kingdom to come were called from that moment to be sons of God, children of the Father; and entering with him into the relations of children with a father, they would be in new and higher relations with God. Formerly slaves, keeping the commandments literally and by compulsion, they would now be doing the will of God and filled with his Spirit, because they were in personal communion with him.¹

Thus there resulted a new moral obligation for every disciple of Jesus. A son of the Father, he must serve him, obey him, do his will; but all this service must be done by love. He will obey because of his confidence; he has faith in his Father. The will of God toward him is an act of kindness. New motives unknown till then

¹ Matt. v. 9, 45-48; vi. 6, 8, 9, 14, 26, 32; vii. 11.

will be born in his soul,—love, confidence, submission, yielding to the Father's will.

In this Jesus created a truly new religion, and his supreme purpose in creating it was to save his people; that is, to prepare them for the coming of the kingdom of God. There was never any thought in these early teachings of a possible violent death in the future, by which Jesus purposed to accomplish salvation. He simply preached a new relation between God and man, a new covenant; and this is in fact a new religion. The way of salvation which he opened and offered was the Father's forgiveness. When the Father should have forgiven men, the age to come would begin. And the Father forgives those who forgive;¹ he receives the penitent prodigal.

The conditions of entrance into the kingdom, then, were repentance, trust, a change of heart. He who fulfilled these would receive a great reward in the kingdom of heaven, provided he had done the

¹ Matt. vi. 14; Mark xi. 25; Matt. xviii. 35; Luke vi. 37; etc. Jesus never attached any other condition to the forgiveness of God than the forgiveness which men extend to their brethren.

will of God and put Jesus' teachings into practice. The tree would be known by its fruit. Those who had loved, forgiven, done good to the poor and suffering would enter the kingdom. Upon this point Jesus' teaching never varied. In a parable of his latest days he declared that those who should be placed at his right hand and enter eternal life would be those who had fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, visited those who were sick and in prison. The Jews said, Practise the Law and you will be worthy of the kingdom. Jesus said, Do the will of God and you will be the son of God. The Lord's Prayer remains the loftiest expression of this high conception of the relations of man with God, which is the whole of the religion first taught by Jesus. We must bear in mind, when we study this prayer, that Jesus said at the same time that the Father knows what things we have need of before we ask for them.¹

The teaching of Jesus in this early period is, then, not to be distinguished from a large, tolerant Pharisaism, taking a long step forward. Most of his aphorisms were

¹ Matt. vi. 8.

borrowed from the Old Testament or from the Rabbis who preceded him. He was persuaded that true Pharisees would approve of his ideas of reform, just as Luther was at first persuaded that he was doing the work of a good Catholic, and would be approved of by the Church and its rulers. In the same way Jesus expected to be approved by every one, welcomed by every one; he deemed that he was doing nothing but what every true zealot of the Law could do and ought to do. Full of confidence himself, he inspired confidence. He had as yet very few disciples, properly so called, but he was reaching consciences, he was touching hearts; his word was sinking deep into men's souls.

CHAPTER IV

THE MESSIAH AND HIS WORK

IN our first volume we affirmed that from the beginning of his ministry Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah. He would not be a Messiah instigating a revolution, like Judas the Gaulonite or any other zealot, but he was the Messiah.

It would seem at first view as though the conviction of his Messianic dignity had been of slow growth. In fact, all that we have said of him up to this time shows simply the work of a Rabbi. He began by preaching, like John the Baptist. Would he have done so if at that time he had believed himself to be any other than also a forerunner? More than this, it is certain that he did not reveal himself to his apostles as Messiah until a much later time, only a year before his death.¹ In these early days he was simply one of those

¹ Matt. xvi. 13-20.

itinerant preachers frequently to be met in Palestine at that time, trying to do some good, healing the sick, casting out demons, preaching the love of the Law, and each in his own way preparing for the coming of the kingdom.

All this is true, and nevertheless Jesus already at this time (and, as we have shown, since the Temptation) had not the slightest doubt as to his own person. He was the very Messiah. This conviction had been forming itself from his youth, and he came forth from his desert-testing absolutely convinced that the Messianic prophecies were to be fulfilled in him, and that he was to be the hero of the Apocalypses of his people.

More than this, Jesus never said, like John the Baptist, that he was only a precursor; and he never limited himself, as John did, to arousing Israel to duty. He clearly performed a Messianic work. It was the Messiah who, in the Sermon on the Mount, opposed his "But *I* say unto you" to "Moses has said to you."¹ It was the Messiah who declared that John the Baptist had no part in the new dispensation.

¹ Matt. v. 22, 28, 32, 34, etc.

sation; who uttered sovereign menaces and promises concerning Bethsaida and Capernaum;¹ who declared himself to be greater than Jonas, than Solomon, than the Temple and the Temple worship;² who called himself the Bridegroom,³ thus justifying the violation of the Sabbath; who forgave the sins of the paralytic;⁴ who assumed the name Son of Man.⁵

No doubt he said, "The kingdom is coming!" and it seems more natural that Jesus, believing himself to be the Messiah, should have said, "The kingdom is come, is present." This is to misunderstand at once the Messianic ideas of Jesus' contemporaries, and the views which Jesus held about himself. According to Jewish notions, the Messiah was to remain for a certain time hidden, occupying this time of humiliation in preparing for the Messianic kingdom.⁶ Now, this is precisely the line of

¹ Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13.

² Matt. xii. 41; Luke xi. 32.

³ Mark ii. 19; Matt. ix. 15; Luke v. 35.

⁴ Mark ii. 5, and parallel passages.

⁵ Mark ii. 10; Matt. viii. 20, x. 23; etc.

⁶ *Jerus. Berakhoth*, fol. 51; *Mishna, Sanhedr.* 28. See Luke xxi. 8; cf. *Justin Martyr, Dial. with Tryph.* chap. viii.

conduct which Jesus chose, and which during his Galilean ministry he carried out. He believed that at this time, in his actual earthly life, he had Messianic functions to exercise. After that the kingdom would appear, and then, in this kingdom to come, he would be the judging and reigning Messiah. But he believed that for the time (and many of his contemporaries also believed him to be the Messiah) he had to live a humble and hidden life, the life of a prophet and servant of God. During this period of poverty and humility he was to prepare for the coming of the kingdom of which some day, and doubtless very soon, he should be the glorious head. This is what Jesus was doing in Galilee.

It was, then, in accordance with Jewish notions of his time that Jesus considered his first duty as Messiah to be the preparation for the coming of the kingdom,—a preparation without display, in which he should carry out the designs of God, and triumph over the enemies of the Law.

This preliminary work was to be entirely Jewish. It was later that Jesus became unsectarian. His present work was to prepare Israel alone for the coming of the

kingdom. But Israel must be prepared; and already at this point he stood apart from the Pharisees, who thought that the kingdom was to be Israel's by right. According to the Apocalypses of the time, the pious portion of the nation was ripe for Messianic felicity; the nation was faithful. Jesus did not think so. It needed to be converted, and the kingdom would not appear until it was converted.

It was precisely because Jesus knew that upon many points he was not in accord with the Pharisees that he did not say openly, "I am the Messiah," but limited himself to acting as the Messiah. Not being in the slightest degree, not in the least wishing to be, the vulgar hero which his nation was expecting, repudiating all political ambition, being persuaded that the Jews would not be ready for the kingdom until they had become once more the true sons of God, he did not proclaim himself as Messiah. If he had done so, his Messianic conception would have clashed with that of the Pharisees, and produced a rupture. Jesus desired to avoid this; he wished to convert his people and the Pharisees themselves to his ideas.

There were many years before him, as he hoped. We know that it was not to be so, — that, contrary to his expectation, he was not to succeed, that a rupture was one day to take place. Very soon he came to perceive that this was inevitable; but he exercised every care to delay it as long as possible, and he refrained from saying that he was the Messiah, in order to avoid any misapprehension. The first thing was to prepare the ground; and he would not proclaim himself the Messiah until hearts had been changed, or at least not until the change had been begun.

We know that nothing of all this was destined to take place. The Jews were not converted. The Pharisees conspired to kill Jesus, and it was when he saw that death was near, close at hand, about to carry him away while still young, that he decided to communicate to the apostles in confidence the great secret which they had already divined, and that Peter said openly, “Thou art the Messiah!”¹

But let us not anticipate. At the hour at which we have now arrived, Jesus foresaw nothing of this dreadful eventual-

¹ Matt. xvi. 16.

ity. He was certain of only one thing, — final success. He did not know when it would come, he did not know how it would come; but he firmly hoped that it would be by the acceptance of his Messianic person. His persuasion of success never faltered. For the moment, sufficient to each day was its evil; he would not borrow care for the morrow. He would perform the humble and difficult duty of to-day. That of to-morrow would perhaps be still more difficult, but the triumph which could not fail to come some day would be the recompense and result of these difficult beginnings and of his fidelity in doing the Father's will. Harvest after seed-sowing; and he would be there in the day of harvest. He was preparing for the kingdom with difficulty and by painful seed-sowing; he would have his day of glory, and he expected it on earth, in a future which could not be very far distant. His reward would be the conversion of his people.

Jesus was essentially an optimist. Optimism is one of those original and distinctive traits of his character which we must set in contrast with the inveterate

pessimism of his contemporaries. Even with the most pious among them nothing in the present was satisfactory. No doubt, to them also the future seemed beautiful and the kingdom of God near ; but their hopes were of the earth, earthy, and God was far off. He might work later, but he was not then manifesting himself.

As for Jesus, he saw God everywhere, he felt his agency in and through everything ; and this faith made him understand the world as something quite other than what the nation saw in it. No doubt to him also the present world was evil, corrupt, wretched ; but the constant joy of his life, and its serene affirmation, was the certainty of the future overthrow of evil, of the kingdom of darkness and of the devil, the king of this world. The Father was living, eternal ; he lived in the Father, and the Father lived in him, the Son. He knew, he saw, he believed ; he was certain ; there was not the shadow of faltering in his faith, particularly in his faith in himself. The Jews with groans of pain were awaiting a super-terrestrial and future good. Jesus, on his part, shed happiness around him, and declared his disciples to be happy

from that very moment, because they were ready to enter the kingdom; already by anticipation they were in possession of it.

By this unalterable optimism, this affirmation of the fatherhood of God, in which he found the joy of his soul, Jesus did not in reality introduce a new spirit; he carried out ancient prophecy. The Jewish theologians of his time misapprehended the true spirit of the old prophetism. They said God is far from men, and constructed a complicated angelology of which the prophets knew nothing; while he preached no abstract God, far withdrawn from men, but, on the contrary, taught the personal communion of the soul with God, the covenant of God with Israel. The Psalms sang in magnificent strains this close communion of believers with Jehovah. According to the Psalmists, God drew near to the nation by the Law. He was not a far-off and hidden God; he was a Father, moved with compassion for his children. Those who observe the Law are near to him. The piety of Jesus had been nourished from his infancy on these words of the psalm-book of his people, and his soul was thor-

oughly saturated with these high religious thoughts.

Jesus, then, was an optimist, and he preached a moral renovation necessary before the coming of the Messianic era and the apparition of the kingdom of God; for though the victory was certain, it was to be dearly bought: it was imperative that evil should be vanquished. Now, Jesus had a most lively and profound sense of man's sin and wretchedness, and he was full of compassion for the suffering. Evil under any of its forms strongly moved him. He suffered because of evil, which comes from Satan. To vanquish Satan, overthrow his throne, should be his Messianic work. The day was to come when he would say in his unalterable certainty of triumph, "I beheld Satan fall as lightning from heaven."¹ This sublime vision haunted him. This was the end to be attained and which should be attained.

These visions sustained him in the struggle; but the struggle was incessant, and, though his communion with the Father was an inexhaustible spring of joy, on the other hand, the view of the world was a

¹ Luke x. 18.

constant source of suffering to his loving heart. This lively sense of the evil in which the world is plunged was certainly one of the most potent factors of his Messianic vocation. Satan was sure to fall, but how powerful he still was ! The kings were slaying the prophets, the doctors were saying and not doing, the good were being persecuted, and tears were the only and unique portion of the good ; in short, the world was the enemy of God and of his holy ones.¹

This is why the words “he was moved with compassion” are continually repeated in the Gospels. Jesus suffered because he loved ; hence his incessant activity, and his longing to save both the souls and the bodies of those who suffer.

This, then, was to be the Messiah’s work. It remains for us to point out one last trait which distinguishes his idea of preparation for the kingdom from that taught by the Jewish doctors of his time. The Pharisees, observing that nothing announced the approaching fall of the

¹ John, *passim*, i. 10 ; vii. 7 ; xiv. 17, 22, 27 ; xv. 18 ff. ; xi. 8, 20, 33 ; vii. 9, 14, 16, 25 ; xii. 31 ; xiv. 30 ; xvi. 11 (cf. 2 Cor. iv. 4 ; Eph. ii. 2).

power of the enemies of God (pagans, Romans, demons, etc.), concluded therefore that their destruction was to be supernatural, that the present world was given over to evil, and that the palingenesis would come only by a miracle, an obligatory forced transformation. They said also that there would be a breach of continuity between the present world and the world to come. Now, the prophets had said precisely otherwise. In their view there was a bond between the present and the future. The same was the case with Jesus. With the aid of the prophets he corrected what he found to be erroneous in the Apocalypses of his time and in the theology of the Pharisees. The bond between the present and the past would be found in his preaching, his invitation to repentance, to a change of heart and life.

According to the Apocalypses, a sudden catastrophe would occur and the present world would come to an end; then heaven would descend upon a transformed earth. The Apocalypses insist upon a *beyond*, of which the prophets have said nothing; for in their view all that they announced would take place in the present world. At this

point Jesus parts company with them ; he also affirms the *beyond*, but he believes in it differently from his people, differently from the Apocalypses of his people. In the view of the Jews of his time, the world, which is evil, was to disappear, and the celestial realities which would follow the *beyond* would be the satisfaction of earthly aspirations and longings. The glorification of Israel would be a striking vengeance of the elect over their enemies. But while condemning the world, they did not part company with it. The best among the Pharisees were saying, “There is not much more to hope from human effort, but the Law must surely serve to assure us good places in the kingdom. Therefore we must keep it strictly, not that we may do what is right, but that we may acquire merit before God.” Thus they began to lose themselves in a minute casuistry. As for the Essenes, they parted company with the world by living as ascetics. Jesus also spoke of renunciation; and with regard to marriage, with regard to money, he uttered Essenian precepts, but he added that in order to enter the kingdom of God one must be born anew,— be regenerated.

Grand and sublime new thought! According to the Pharisees, whoever observed the Law should possess the coming glory. This glory would not be the natural consequence of the events which were occurring; it would follow as a supernatural intervention of God, making Israel to triumph over his enemies. But Jesus taught that man must fight against his own nature and be regenerated by the Spirit of God.

Jesus then apprehended his Messianic task in an entirely new manner. It was to consist in saving his people,—that is to say, in preparing them to enter the kingdom. He would prepare them and save them by making of them a humble, repentant, lowly, regenerated people.

For the accomplishment of this work Jesus had faith in his Father's assistance. The Father works, and the Son also works,¹ and by prayer continually renews his spiritual strength. He therefore made appeal with his auditors to these two moral powers of which he himself had daily experience,—will and prayer. Neither of these ought to be checked by considerations drawn from the fatal forces of nature and the

¹ John v. 17.

blind laws which surround us as with an iron circle. Prayer is and must remain prayer, and one must take the word with strictest literalness. On this subject Jesus made use of comparisons of a sublime familiarity.¹ The child of God asks, and no explanation ought either to change the nature or attenuate the meaning of this word "ask." To pray as if one could do nothing, to pray with the assurance that God can do everything and that he hears prayer, that he is love, that he has the heart of a Father and that we are his children, — this is what Jesus taught; this is what no consideration drawn from the physical world ought to weaken. To this precise and clear instruction he joined an appeal to the will, to the moral energy, and moved men to shame for all their weaknesses and cowardice.

One who was converted was born anew. This term excludes all explanation of conversion by a mere normal development of the former life. Conversion is the true moral supernatural; otherwise it would be nothing more than a fortunate evolution of the natural man.

¹ Luke xi. 5-13; xviii. 1-8.

In all this early preaching Jesus affirms mercy and liberty, for to him sin is a thing out of the natural order. It is not a necessary phase in the development of man ; it is that which ought not to be, and some day it will be abolished. Let us observe, finally, that though Jesus was an optimist he was by no means a fatalist in his optimism, and he did not believe in inevitable progress. He made appeal to each man ; each individual should be active and make progress. Many people to-day believe in a general progress of humanity, in the evolution of the masses toward the light, toward the good, toward a future goal which will be attained as a matter of necessity. In the same way the Jews believed in a kingdom of God which was in a certain way fatal, certain, coming for every one. The error which they committed and which is also our own, is impugned by the facts. There are nations which fall, and there are individuals who fall. On the other hand, the good does not come of itself. It is not a necessary evolution ; individual heroism makes it triumph. That is what Jesus preached when he was preparing for the coming of the kingdom by

the change of men's hearts ; this was what, above all, he showed in his life, by being the perfect model of that personal heroism which nothing checks, and which is sustained by unalterable faith and hope.

CHAPTER V

JESUS AND MIRACLES

OUR earliest information concerning the ministry of Jesus is this: "Jesus of Nazareth, anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with power, went about doing good and healing all them who were under the power of Satan, for God was with him."¹ This testimony is of indisputable authenticity. If it had not been preserved, if the Gospels had not related a single cure performed by Jesus, we should still have a right to suppose it, for he was a Rabbi, and in his quality of Rabbi he must have exercised the functions of a physician. Every Rabbi was a physician; there were no other physicians than the Rabbis, and, in a general way, men of consideration for piety, to whatever religious party they might belong.

For instance, to heal the sick was one of the principal functions of the Essenes.

¹ Acts x. 38. See also Matt. iv. 23.

The Pharisees also cast out demons;¹ and here again, while exercising the functions of a Rabbi, Jesus followed both Essenian and Pharisaic customs. It is to be observed that the physician depended upon individual inspiration; it was not knowledge that fitted him to heal, but piety, all of which did not prevent cures being from time to time obtained by remedies pointed out by the Rabbis, small as was the advance in medical science in Palestine in the first century.

But their cures were especially performed by religious practices, for illness was always considered either as the punishment of sin² or as the act of a demon.³ This is why it was the Rabbi, the pious man given to religious meditation and dreaded by demons, who was capable of healing. The Essenes and the Pharisees, as we have said, were very much given to the expulsion of demons, and they often succeeded in this. Jesus admitted that the Pharisees cast them out.⁴

¹ Matthew xii. 27; Luke xi. 19.

² John v. 14, ix. 1 f., 34.

³ Matt. ix. 32, 33, xii. 22; Luke xiii. 11, 16.

⁴ Matt. xii. 27.

All maladies, not possessions only, were attributed to moral causes ; no one sought for a physical cause. To be sure, certain medicinal plants were used, but very sparingly, for the ills with which the sick were vexed had before all things a Satanic origin. Healing could therefore be only a moral act and a moral achievement ; therefore the more pious the physician the more skilful was he to heal.

It is therefore easy to understand the immense reputation which Jesus acquired in the Galilean villages. He passed for a remarkable physician, precisely because he concerned himself with the salvation of souls, and never separated the two cures of soul and body. Jesus was, above all, held to be a very powerful and much dreaded exorcist.¹

No one who is somewhat conversant with the history of medicine through the ages will be surprised at the close relations of medicine and religion in Palestine in the first century. To tell the truth, these relations had always existed among all

¹ Mark v. 12, 15, 17, 33, 36, vi. 50, x. 32. Cf. Matt. viii. 27, 34, ix. 8, xiv. 27, xvii. 6, 7, xxviii. 5, 10; Luke iv. 18, v. 17, viii. 25, 35, 37, ix. 34.

peoples. No science has developed more slowly than that of medicine.

In Greece, by a unique exception, its progress was extremely remarkable. Almost five hundred years before Christ Hippocrates created scientific medicine, founded upon experience and the observation of facts ; but this progress, due to the genius of a single man, remained alone. The methods of Hippocrates, his very name, were unknown in Judea. Outside of Greece the physician continued to be for centuries what he was in the origin of humanity, — a personage surrounded by mystery, placing himself in relations with Divinity, calling to him favorable spirits and driving bad spirits away ; and this view of things was current in Palestine in the time of Jesus Christ. Why should we be surprised that disease was always attributed to evil spirits, when in our own day many country folk still believe in the reality of possession ? Are not the sorcerers of the present day nearly related to the healers of the olden time, and are not the magicians of the negro tribes of Africa the true sons of the physicians of antiquity ?

The surgeon was in an entirely different

position. As there is nothing mysterious in a broken leg, and the cause of the ailment is known, the surgeon was a personage much less esteemed than the physician. This was long the case. In France, even to the seventeenth century, surgeons were classed with barbers and hairdressers, and in the time of Louis XIV. the surgeon might operate only upon the order and under the oversight of the physician. The latter was a superior being, who might look upon the sick person but would not stoop to touch him. He had his mysterious processes, and loved to give himself out for something supernatural.

Assuredly, Jesus did not take this attitude; but in this as in all other things he must be considered in the environment in which he lived. In his mind preaching and healing stood on the same level.¹ He was the physician who gave health to the soul, either by reaching it directly by his word, or by healing the body which it inhabited, for disease came from Satan. It was a possession; and whether Jesus preached or healed, his end was the same in both cases,—it was the soul which he

¹ Matt. ix. 12, 13.

desired to reach, and Satan whom he was fighting.

It has been said that Jesus was fulfilling his Messianic work when he healed the sick and occupied himself with them. We do not think so. In practising medicine he was acting simply as a Rabbi and not at all as the Messiah. If he had been acting as the Messiah, he would have drawn attention to his cures; he would have put in a strong light the marvellous, miraculous side of his work, and would have pointed to it as a proof of his Messiahship; and this he never did. On this point Renan has fallen into an error, most surprising on the part of a man so well versed in Palestinian Judaism of the first century. He says that Jesus in his quality of Messiah must have permitted miracles to be attributed to him because the Messiah was expected to perform miracles. When he assumed this character, he was obliged to submit to certain features of it of which he disapproved. It was no doubt repugnant to him to appear to do miracles which he did not do, but he must needs resign himself to it. The error is a singular one, for Jesus never posed as a miracle-worker, and Renan gives

no proof that he did. If Renan's assertion was correct, he must have said after performing a miracle, "Observe this miraculous deed: it is the proof that I am the Messiah." But Jesus simply performed miracles as a Rabbi; he healed the sick because he was moved with compassion toward them, and the irrefragable proof of Renan's error is that Jesus forbade those whom he healed to divulge their miraculous cure. He did not, then, count upon the effect produced by the prodigy which he had just accomplished to bring about his acceptance as Messiah. Once, again, every Rabbi was a physician, and the compassion of Jesus, his immense compassion for men, moved him to assuage their moral and physical ills. This is the whole secret of his cures.

Jesus, then, concealed his miracles; so far as Messianic works were concerned, he left them entirely out of the question, doing them in secret and forbidding that they should be spoken of.¹ One day, in spite of himself, when a demon recognized him, he forbade him to speak of his Messiahship,

¹ Matt. viii. 4, ix. 30, 31, xii. 16 f.; Mark i. 44, vii. 24 f., viii. 26.

for this demon believed in it and knew it to be true, because a demon, whose spirit is of higher order than the spirit of man, knows, divines, understands things that remain unknown by man.¹

More than this, when Jesus healed a sick person he made a point of showing that the moral healing was much more important in his eyes than physical healing. He made a point of saying to the sick person, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Pardon is the true healing ; the healing of the body is nothing other than its symbol.

This fact is manifested with ample evidence in the healing of demoniacs. There especially the return to health appeared clearly to be a victory over sin,—that is to say, over the world of darkness and the evil spirits who reign there.

Belief in demons was very general in antiquity. The Greeks and Romans, like the Jews, were convinced that evil spirits took possession of the bodies of certain persons. We have said that all maladies were by the Jews attributed to demons, but there were certain diseases more evidently their work, especially those where the

¹ Mark i. 24, 25, 34, iii. 12; Luke iv. 41.

patient appears to belong no longer to himself (hysterical disturbances, nervous maladies, madness), or those of which the cause cannot be seen (mutism, deafness). These affections were believed to be undeniable cases of possession. Others, leprosy for instance, were less evidently maladies of Satanic origin; nevertheless, like the others, they came from the world of darkness.

Let us now study in detail the methods of healing employed by Jesus. The first fact is that Jesus acts entirely as a physician. He often puts questions like a doctor who is concerned to inform himself as to the gravity of a case. "How long is it since this came unto him?"¹ He asks a blind man whose cure he has begun if he sees aught.² It is the physician informing himself and wishing to be informed. On that day he healed slowly and by several stages. He commanded that food should be given the daughter of Jairus;³ it was as a medical prescription. He made clay with spittle.⁴ To complete the cure begun, he commanded a sick man to wash in a

¹ Mark ix. 21.

² Mark viii. 23; cf. v. 9.

³ Mark v. 43.

⁴ John ix. 6; Mark viii. 23.

certain pool which he indicated.¹ Once, to heal a deaf mute he put his fingers into his ears, touched his tongue with saliva, breathed a deep sigh, and said the words, “Be opened!”² Here the healing was slow, difficult, and one may almost doubt whether in the end it was actually effected. From time to time these difficult healings occur. There was a particularly ill-disposed and tenacious sort of demon who would consent to go out only after the exorcist had fasted and prayed.³ Therefore Jesus, who most generally waited to be asked before performing a miracle,⁴ at times performed a cure only as the result of effort, a veritable moral effort. Notwithstanding his great compassion, he even went so far as to shun the sick who implored and supplicated his aid, in order to retire to a solitude to pray.

In fact, a cure was not certain. It depended upon one essential condition, that the sick person should have faith, and even

¹ John ix. 6.

² Mark vii. 33 f.

³ Matt. xvii. 21; Mark ix. 29. It is possible that the mention of the fact is not authentic.

⁴ Matt. xii. 39, xvi. 4, xvii. 16; Mark viii. 22 f., ix. 18; Luke ix. 11.

that the bystanders should have it too.¹ When there was faith neither in the person of the sick nor of those who were with him, Jesus did not perform a cure; he could not succeed.² This was not merely refusal on his part, the refusal to perform an act which he might have performed if he had so willed; no, it was an impossibility. And the converse is true: when the multitude were full of enthusiasm and faith, Jesus performed many cures, even at a distance and without the sick person being present.

The presence of Jesus sufficed; it kept up a beneficent moral excitement, and provoked a confidence which put the sick person into communication with him by the intermediary of the multitude. Cases of suggestion which much resemble those are cited in our own day. The sick person's faith or that of the crowd is what performs the miracle. Jesus was so much convinced of this that he never said, "I have healed thee," but "Thy faith hath healed thee." So, when he used clay to anoint the eyes

¹ "Seeing *their* faith." Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 5; Luke v. 20.

² Mark vi. 5, 6; Matt. xiii. 58.

of a blind man,¹ when it was enough for a woman to touch his garment and be healed,² he attached no superstitious idea to these acts. He said to that woman, as to the others, "Thy faith hath saved thee," and not "Thy contact with my garment saved thee."

How was the healing produced? Judging by the example just cited, it might be the case that it was produced by contact with the garment of Jesus, even without his knowledge.³ But in general the sick person was healed as a consequence of words pronounced by Jesus in a tone of command.⁴ Doubtless there resulted from the tone of his words a moral commotion which made easy the return to health of him who had faith.

As for Jesus himself, it was by prayer that he healed. He had a profound and glowing faith that his prayer would be answered. There is nothing concerning which Jesus spoke with more unalterable conviction than of the hearing of prayer. He had a personal, full, absolute certainty

¹ John ix. 6; Mark viii. 23. ² Mark v. 27, 28.

³ Mark iii. 10; v. 30; vi. 56.

⁴ Mark i. 25, and *passim*.

that one can do all things by prayer ; by it one acts upon God, and through him upon nature itself.¹

This is why Jesus certainly performed true miracles, and did it often ; for God certainly gave him the answer to his prayers, and he often had experience of a direct response to his supplications by the Father. When he said, “ Ask and ye shall receive,”² he drew this observation from the depths of his personal experience. He had asked and he had received ; he had knocked at the Father’s door, and the Father had opened to him the treasures of his compassion, and his answers to prayer.

The incontestable authenticity of the greater number of the sayings uttered by Jesus when healing this or that sick person, on the occasion of this or that miracle, is the irrefutable proof of the authenticity of the miracle itself. In our day, in certain religious establishments in Switzerland, for example, Christians of ardent faith have obtained cures by prayer, cures which have been scientifically demon-

¹ Matt. xviii. 19, xxi. 21, 22 ; Mark xi. 23, 24.

² Matt. vii. 7 ff. and parallel passages.

strated ; and whoever believes in the power of God and the power of prayer believes that health may be given back by God to a sick person who asks it or for whom others intercede. So much the more must Jesus have obtained such cures.

We have spoken up to this time only of the cures performed by Jesus, but what we have said of these may be applied to all the miracles attributed in the Gospels to Christ. We have not the slightest *a priori* objection to their authenticity. But each one must be studied separately, by itself, and in the light of a sound criticism ; and criticism should rest upon this indisputable principle, this final affirmation of modern science, — the laws of nature are inviolable.

In our first volume we explained our views of the state of men's minds in Palestine in the first century ; of the facility with which every one saw miracles everywhere, and the difference there is in this matter between a man of that period and a man of our own, who, on the other hand, sees none anywhere. This remark must be borne in mind ; and since it has been averred that the laws of nature are invio-

lable, it follows that the fact called a miracle, if it be authentic, if it really took place, can only be a fact which temporarily lies outside of the known forces of nature.

As Jesus never drew attention to the marvellous or inexplicable elements in the miracles he performed, it follows — and this statement is of the highest importance — that he never desired that men should see anything magical even in his most extraordinary acts. One of the victories of the Temptation consisted precisely in repudiating every act which by an appearance of prodigy might be likely to dazzle and amaze the multitude. All that seemed like sorcery or magic, everything which might resemble an act of dexterity designed to arouse astonishment, was entirely outside of his method, and never had anything to do with the gospel as he conceived and preached it. Miracle as miracle is foreign to the Christianity of Jesus.

This is all the more remarkable because Jesus' disciples and all his contemporaries, without exception, looked upon miracles from an entirely different point of view.

They called them signs ; and to their minds a divine messenger, and especially the Messiah, could only accredit himself by performing miracles and also by fulfilling prophecy. These two proofs were absolutely required. Given that the miracles were thoroughly authentic and the fulfilment of prophecy perfectly evident, all doubt was dispelled. The disciples, therefore, could only receive a miracle-working Messiah. This is easily to be seen from many passages in the Gospels, and in consequence the greatness of Jesus' views and the originality of his ideas on this point are all the more easy to discern, and all the more certainly authentic.

It is so true that miracles made no part of his mission that when he cast out a demon he forbade the possessed man with threats (what threats ? — perhaps of a return of his malady) to make known his cure ; and twice he refused to perform a miracle, because it would be perfectly evident that he was its author, being performed before the eyes of the Pharisees, the learned men of the time.¹ On this occasion he declared that the true sign of his mission was his

¹ Matt. xii. 38 ff., xvi. 1 ff.; Mark viii. 11.

preaching, as powerful as that of Jonas, and his wisdom, as great as that of Solomon. In the parable of the wicked rich man, when the latter, being in torment, thought of his five brothers, and asked Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them that they should not also come into torment, Abraham replied: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead.”¹ Therefore the miracle of miracles, the resurrection from the dead, proves less, has less of evidential value, than the preaching of Moses and of the prophets; and it follows from this passage that, in the mind of Jesus, the truth of his preaching, the authenticity of his mission, his gospel, in short, are not proved by one of his miracles, not even by his own resurrection from the dead.²

¹ Luke xvi. 31.

² One passage alone appears to oppose this constant attitude of Jesus; namely, the reply to the messengers of John the Baptist: “Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to

When Jesus forbade those whom he healed to speak of his miracles, it was assuredly not that we should pass them over in silence to-day. This chapter would not have been written if we had thus understood his words on the subject. Nevertheless in that prohibition he gave us an important teaching, a teaching entirely misunderstood by believers who persist in finding an apologetic value in miracles. For if

them" (Matt. xi. 5; Luke vii. 22). But here Jesus does not appeal to his miracles because they are prodigies, to draw from them the conclusion that John ought to believe in him; he appeals to them because they are acts of compassion, and victories achieved over Satan. Jesus arranges his remarkable deeds in gradation, and after the resurrection of the dead he mentions the preaching of the gospel to the poor, a purely moral act, which appears to him even more surprising than the raising of the dead. In fact, each time that he performs his work, whether to heal a sick person or to preach the gospel, but especially in preaching the gospel, and preaching it to the poor, he is laboring to overturn Satan's throne; and this is the purpose of his life. Even in this passage, which, it is to be remarked, is unique, Jesus considers his miracles as religious acts, victories of God over Satan, of light over darkness. Every converted soul, and every sick person healed, push back the limits of the kingdom of darkness, one as much as the other, or, rather, the converted soul more than the other.

there is one fact to be deduced with overwhelming evidence from the attitude of the Christ, it is that they have none, and that it serves nothing at all to demonstrate their authenticity. Such a demonstration has merely a historic interest, like the demonstration of the existence of Homer, and can in no case have any religious value whatsoever. If Jesus had not performed a single miracle (I mean a single physical miracle), that could have subtracted absolutely nothing from the value of his person, and the reality of the moral supernaturalness which radiates from his whole being. "Say nothing to any one!" Nothing is indifferent that Jesus says; the least of his words is of capital importance, and it may be affirmed that Christians have not yet understood the significance of this command.

"A historic event, whether extraordinary or not," writes M. Lachelier,¹ "cannot be an object of faith, precisely because it is historic and by that very fact an object of knowledge. The same is the case with regard to the conclusions which may be drawn from a miracle with regard to the

¹ From an unpublished letter to the author.

character and power of him who performed it. Such conclusions, supposing them to be legitimate, will always belong in the order of knowledge, and will never constitute a moral and religious *faith*."

CHAPTER VI

EARLIEST PREACHING OF JESUS ON THE
KINGDOM OF GOD

THE two words *Hammalkuth hash-shamayim* (the kingdom of heaven) are certainly those which Jesus most often uttered; he preferred this expression to the “kingdom of God.” In our former volume we explained that the two expressions are synonymous. Jesus employed the former; the apostles, doubtless in order to be better understood by Gentiles, made use of the second. Still, though the two expressions are synonymous, they present a shade of difference; and we may compare with the marked preference of Jesus for the form “kingdom of heaven” (*les cieux*), his use of the expression of which he was equally fond, “the Father who is in heaven” (*les cieux*). He speaks also of rewards “in heaven” (*les cieux*). Now, the Rabbis of that time held to the

existence of several heavens,—at least seven,—one above the other, overhead in the blue expanse which is spread abroad beyond the clouds.¹ There was to be found the new earth, “the heavenly Jerusalem,” the kingdom to come; and the doctors, founding their view upon Daniel² and Enoch,³ believed that this kingdom, called “of the heavens” because it was in the heavens,⁴ would descend from it, all complete, all set in order in some sort, to be established upon the earth. The Son of Man appearing in the clouds would find it, with the help of the angels.⁵ Then the elect would “see” and “enter” it.⁶ These expressions were taken in their most literal sense; and when men said the kingdom is at hand, or has come,⁷ they meant it is about to descend, it will soon be established.

Nothing indicates that Jesus understood by “kingdom of heaven” anything different from what his contemporaries understood;

¹ Bereshith Rabba. Bamidebar Rabba. Syb. Orac. 3, 83; Test. Patriarch, 12 (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 2; Eph. iv. 10; Heb. iv. 14).

² Dan. vii. ff.

³ Book of Enoch, *passim*.

⁴ See Rev. xxi. 10.

⁵ Matt. xvi. 27.

⁶ John iii. 3, 5.

⁷ Matt. iv. 17.

nothing authorizes us to find him using on this subject any different language from that of the doctors of his people.

If Jesus had held any other views upon this important doctrine than those of his contemporaries, he would have said so; he would have carefully distinguished his way of looking at it from that of his people. Especially when speaking to his apostles, deprecating any misunderstanding on their part, clearly perceiving how natural such a misunderstanding would be, he would have taken care to dissipate it, would have warned, explained, put them on their guard. But he did nothing of the kind. Not only did he never take these precautions; on the contrary, he made use of all the expressions of his contemporaries, used them just as they used them, repeated them just as they did and in the sense which everybody gave them. To say that Jesus was speaking with another meaning, spiritualizing, allegorizing, symbolizing, is wholly arbitrary. The hearers of Jesus could have understood another mode of speech concerning the kingdom to come only with the clearest and most precise explanations, distinguish-

ing the two views. But the Gospels show not the slightest trace of explanations of this kind.

When Jesus spoke of the kingdom, he always used the future tense. All the rewards promised in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount were in the future. For him, as for all his contemporaries, the kingdom was *to come*. It was always in the future in his teachings; and never, not even on the eve of his death, did he speak of the kingdom as present and already founded.¹

Jesus also taught his disciples to say, “Thy kingdom come!” — the continual prayer of the Jews ever since the Exile, and certainly his own, as it had been in his childhood and his youth. If he added, “Thy will be done on earth as in heaven,” it was because he mentally added “that

¹ If we read *is* instead of *will be* in the following passages, Matt. v. 3, 10, xi. 11; Luke vii. 28, ix. 62 [The English version is in the present. — *Trans.*], the reference is evidently to a possession so certain that it is anticipated as present. In the same way Jesus says elsewhere, “He that believeth in me *hath* eternal life.” For that matter, Jesus spoke without the verb, in Aramæan, *Lo anî hammalkuth hash-shamayim!* (“To the poor in spirit the kingdom of heaven!”)

it may be possible for the kingdom which is in heaven to appear upon the earth."

Jesus, then, announced the kingdom as to come. The earliest passages in the Gospels leave no doubt on this subject. When he cried, "Seek ye first the kingdom!"¹ that meant "Seek by prayers, ask God, that the kingdom may come." The close of the Sermon on the Mount is explicit: "He who doeth the will of God shall enter into the kingdom."

Such, then, was his mission as Messiah, — to say, "The kingdom is at hand." In this Jesus made no innovation. All Jews held that the Messiah's first mission would, in fact, be to announce the near approach of the kingdom of God. At a later day, when Jesus was putting his disciples on their guard against the false Messiahs who were to come, he told them that in order to induce belief in their Messiahship they would all say, "I am he, and the time is at hand!"² This is precisely what he was himself doing.

Having worked out his first thought of the kingdom, he formulated it in several parables, as was his custom.

¹ Luke xii. 31.

² Luke xxi. 8.

In these allegories¹ he told how the kingdom was being prepared for. He compared himself to a sower. He was sowing the seed. Those who heard and bore fruit would enter into the kingdom, whose coming was symbolized by the future harvest. The story of the mustard seed represented the state of things which would make ready for the coming of the kingdom. The number of those who were to have a part in the kingdom was at present small, like a mustard seed, but it would keep on growing and would be immense when the kingdom appeared. The same is the case in the action of leaven upon dough; the word which prepares for the coming of the kingdom has a hidden power which will so transform the hearts of the disciples as to make them capable of entering the coming kingdom. One must sacrifice everything in order to enter the kingdom, like the man who finds a treasure hidden in a field; and we must seek for the kingdom, that is, prepare for it, as one seeks for a pearl of great price. For the time being Jesus and his disciples were casting the net, and gathering into

¹ Matt. xiii. 1 ff.

it all sorts of men ; but only they would enter the kingdom who should be judged worthy at the sorting of the last Judgment. The same thought is expressed in the parable of the wheat and the tares ; the kingdom cannot be other than future, since its coming is represented by the harvest, which will be accompanied by the great separation made by the angels.¹

Everything which concerned the kingdom was mysterious, that is, secret and hidden.² At a future time these hidden

¹ The kingdom is, then, future, and the parables of Matthew xiii. do not in the least signify that Jesus was at that very time founding it by his preaching. He was preparing for its coming,—a very different thing. It is true that at a later day he said to the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God is in the midst of you,” or “within you” (Luke xvii. 21), and again, “It is come upon you” (Luke xi. 21); but he certainly did not desire by such words to indicate anything other than possession of the kingdom by anticipation,—a presence which is virtual because it is imminent. No other interpretation of these passages is possible. To explain them by saying that in them Jesus affirmed that the kingdom was founded and was already present in the world, would be to put him in contradiction with the entire teaching of his ministry, by virtue of two isolated verses. (See a complete exposition of these passages in chapter ix., “Opposition to Jesus,” page 143).

² Matt. xiii. 11 f.

things would become visible. When the kingdom should appear, every one would know all these mysteries.¹ When the kingdom should appear, Jesus would put the finishing touch to his work, merging it in that which he was now doing, for both consist in bringing about the reign of God. Jesus was the great Reformer. The revolution which he was announcing would be radical. He was looking for nothing less than a universal restoration.²

For the time being he was performing a work of preparation ; there were, in fact, aptitudes to acquire before men could be ready to enter the kingdom, aptitudes purely moral. He must therefore prepare for it by a wholly spiritual and subjective work, — by the changing of hearts.

He repudiated anything like political preparation ; so early as the days of temptation he had put aside all idea of a Messiahship of the strong hand, a triumph by force. The Messianic hopes of the Pharisees were, above all things, political. If at one moment of his life Jesus was attracted by certain Pharisaic ideas, he never was

¹ Matt. xiii. 12.

² Acts iii. 21 ; Matt. xix. 28.

by this one ; he never seems to have been interested in politics, and never thought of such a thing as revolt. Popular seditions appeared to him criminal and useless ; the adventure of Judas the Gaulonite had made that clear. He paid tribute to the Romans, and from the very first he practised his celebrated maxim, “ Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” In this matter, indeed, he was simply following the example of the Essenes, who were most careful not to meddle with politics.

But let us beware of thinking that Jesus, taking no part in politics and desiring to take no such part, had for that reason renounced his patriotic faith and his Messianic hopes. To see a visible and national kingdom founded in his lifetime, to see the Jews choosing him for Messiah and Master and proclaiming him king, — such was, till the last, the great hope of his life. No doubt he hid himself when the multitude wished to make him king ;¹ but solely because the hour had not yet come, and the people were under a misapprehension as to the true nature of his Messiahship,

¹ John vi. 5.

believing that he intended to appeal to arms and make use of violence. Never, even in his hour of temptation, did he repudiate the national Messianic kingdom. We shall see him on Palm Sunday yielding without resistance to the ovations of the multitude, and accepting the homage paid to the Messiah-king. Jesus had always the most ardent and profound sympathy with the national hopes of his people.

We must, above all things, not forget that Jesus constructed no theories, and never spoke by virtue of a clearly defined system, a logical construction. He did not reason about the kingdom, saying, "It shall be this and shall not be that. I reject this detail which my people admit. I accept that one; I bring to it this new idea, this unknown solution." To understand what Jesus said and thought about the kingdom, we must put ourselves in thought in the first century, breathe the atmosphere of the time, saturate our minds with the Jewish notions of the period, and then we shall perceive that Jesus by no means came to found the kingdom of God and promulgate its laws, but that he came to announce its coming and hasten it, by

detaching men's souls from this world and preparing them for the world to come. This is the key to his ministry in Galilee.

Concern for the future, and for what the future would be, never left him for an instant. Sometimes he would speak as if the world were on the eve of a catastrophe ; again he spoke as a reformer who had abundant time before him, who had come to open new paths and change the hearts of men. The two attitudes appear to be contradictory, but they are not in the least so ; for on the one hand Jesus never announced a progressive development of the kingdom, but spoke of a sudden and final catastrophe for which men should prepare ; and, on the other hand, the catastrophe though not far distant was not imminent. Every one had a certain time before him, short no doubt, but still a certain time for preparation. In other words, the coming of the kingdom was near, but not immediate (the kingdom "is at hand") ; and Jesus himself was preparing for it by founding a society of disciples which was to abide, which had before it, not several centuries, — Jesus never spoke of a future of several centuries, — but at least

a few years, perhaps many ; he did not know exactly how many.¹ He spoke of the leaven, whose action is slow ; of the grain of mustard seed, which takes a certain time to grow. He did not look for a rapid success ; but he was still young, there was time ; little by little the seed would grow. He had placed himself in the Father's hands, he was awaiting his hour ; he had no preconceived views and no self-deceptions.

This is how Jesus, while considering the final catastrophe as near at hand, still came as a law-giver and reformer. His moral teaching plainly shows that the proximity of the Judgment was not immediate ; but it was near, for his own pre-occupation in his moral teachings was to make men better with intent to prepare them to enter the kingdom.

Jesus then saw in the kingdom neither a spiritual deliverance nor the reign of the poor and lowly. To say so is to confound the kingdom itself with the state of mind which would prepare for it.

In fact, to prepare oneself for it, one

¹ "None knoweth the day nor the hour, not even the Son" (Mark xiii. 32).

must become poor and lowly, as we shall show in the next chapter; and as to the kingdom it was to be very nearly what Daniel and Enoch had described. Jesus neither criticised nor rejected the apocalyptic beliefs of his people. Let us not forget that never was a critical question put by Jesus. He no more thought of criticising the Messianic hopes of his time than the Pentateuch, and to the end of his life he affirmed that the Messiah would return again upon the clouds of heaven to judge the world.¹ He took this place of judge as much in the early days² as in the parables of the last week of his life.³ On this point he never changed. He was to preside over the last Judgment. This was his duty and office as Messiah.

Further, — and this was the very soul of what we have dared to call his profound and

¹ To hold that Jesus took these expressions in a spiritual sense and saw only figures in the expressions, “come down from heaven,” “come in the clouds,” is to represent him as saying aside to himself, “I will adopt all the phraseology of my time; I will use the most realistic apocalyptic language, but it shall be in my own mind only figurative and symbolical; and I will tell no one this. They must divine it.”

² Matt. vii. 21 ff.

³ Matt. xxv. 31 ff.

fine genius, — though he destroyed none of his people's beliefs, he fulfilled them, he brought out their very life. That which in his eyes was most grand, most sublime, in the coming kingdom was that justice should be established, and that they who now hunger and thirst should be filled.¹ It was the righteousness of the kingdom which men must first of all seek.² The sorrowful should be consoled, the meek should reign.³ The future kingdom would not be an avenging kingdom, a kingdom of blood; Jesus could not admit that. But he did not reject this aspect of his people's belief as the result of critical reasoning and philosophical examination; his soul refused to believe for a single moment that the kingdom of God, which in his view, as in that of all Jews, would be the domination of God and consequently of the Father who is in heaven, could be anything else than love, peace, joy, pardon, eternal life. All the rest was for him as if it did not exist.

At a later day, in the view of his disciples, the kingdom would be the Christian Church, the society of souls who believed

¹ Matt. v. 6. ² Matt. vi. 33. ³ Matt. v. 4 f.

in Jesus. To Jesus it was nothing else than the Messianic era; but (and it is here that he is incomparably great) it was he who prepared for the conception of the disciples by raising high the notion of the kingdom, accepting all that his people taught on the subject, and entirely transforming it.

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR BY THE
LOWLY AND THE POOR

LET us now see Jesus preparing for the coming of the kingdom.

His first object was to communicate to men that sense of divine sonship which he himself fully possessed; he desired to create it in men's souls. To experience this feeling, one must become "humble," — humble in rank, in money, in influence, and humble in happiness. Therefore he declares those happy who weep and who suffer.

Jesus made the most of the fact that the interpretations by his contemporaries of certain passages in Daniel concerning the fifth empire were very diverse, to give another, which was exceedingly spiritual but not at all revolutionary. Everything in Judaism was to be retained, but it was to be transformed, and this transformation

was to be effected by a change in hearts.¹ It was nothing else than piety, true piety, taking the place of rites and external acts. This piety would have its foundation in humility, renunciation, a profound sense of poverty of spirit.

This was why Jesus preached a new righteousness, which he opposed to that of the Scribes and Pharisees. In their view, alms, fasts, prayers, works, make a man righteous and confer merit upon him. Jesus preached a higher righteousness.² Man must humble himself, become lowly, poor in spirit, contemplative, must hunger and thirst, cry earnestly for mercy, — for the Father is merciful, he is full of compassion, he remits the debt, he forgives those who forgive. The beginning of the new life, then, is the desire to attain to it. To be conscious of our shortcomings is already, in some sort, to receive it.³

Yet Jesus never said that hunger and thirst after righteousness carry their satis-

¹ It is always the same method,—destroy nothing, fulfil all things.

² Matt. v. 20.

³ It has been said, and with reason, that to be conscious of one's limitations is already in some degree to have overpassed them

faction in themselves. The kingdom of God is in no sense realized by the fact of being sought after, desired, aspired unto. It is not hunger that nourishes, nor thirst that refreshes. To desire righteousness is not to obtain it; otherwise the kingdom would have been founded by the very fact that Jesus was preparing for it. And he never said so. The kingdom was *to come*, and righteousness was to be obtained only at a later time, at its coming. Then those who now hunger and thirst for it shall be satisfied. One does not answer his own prayers because he prays, and, in the same way, one does not enter the kingdom because he seeks for it; but one prepares himself for it and he will enter it. A change of hearts and minds (repentance, "for the kingdom is at hand")¹ is, then, only the preparation for the kingdom, and not the kingdom itself.

As we have said, Jesus expected the kingdom on earth. The transformation of society and of the world was to be accomplished here, as soon as the Jews should be converted. Every one would then acclaim Jesus as Messiah; the king-

¹ Mark i. 15 and parallel passages.

dom would appear, and the spiritual domination of the Christ would begin upon the earth. The Father would accord the promised rewards,—those of some would be great;¹ and an era of universal felicity would begin.

What was to take place at the beginning of this era? How would the kingdom be inaugurated? By a sudden change. The contrary of that which is would be. The world to come would be the present world reversed. The first would be last, and the last first.² At the present time good and evil are mingled, like the tares and the wheat in a field. Then there would be a great separation; it would be like a great drawing of the net.³ Jesus often referred to the surprise which this sudden reversal of things would occasion. No one would be expecting it, and when this transformation should have been made it would be final.

One of the most unexpected reversals which would take place would be the

¹ Matt. v. 12, 19, x. 42; Luke vi. 23, 35; Mark ix. 41.

² Matt. xix. 30, xx. 16; Mark x. 31; Luke xiii. 30.

³ Matt. xiii. 24 f., 31, 33, 47 f.; Mark iv. 11 f.

exaltation of the lowly, the humble, the unknown; they would become the great, and would in their turn take first rank. Jesus therefore counted much upon the poor in the preparation for the coming of the kingdom.¹ "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." The simple, the humble, the fishermen of the lake, were the future children of the kingdom. Concerning the rich, Jesus always professed the most literal Essenian doctrine, and his thought concerning those who have possessions never varied.²

Let us bear in mind that the environment from which Jesus came was that of the populace, the poor, the working-class, and that the artisans and humble people who knew nothing about politics were dreaming, above all things, of a social renovation. To realize a fortune and give a part of the money to the poor was for the Essenes one of the first conditions to fulfil in order to be ready to enter the

¹ Luke xvi. 15.

² Matt. v. 3, 20, xviii. 3, xix. 14, 23, 24, xxi. 31, xxii. 2 f.; Mark x. 14, 15, 23-25; Luke iv. 18 f., vi. 20, xviii. 16, 17, 24, 25.

kingdom when it should appear; and when we recall to mind that this was also the case in the earliest Christian community, we recognize that we are here in presence of an idea and a practice of the early days.

Furthermore Jesus preached voluntary poverty.¹ In the outset of his ministry, and probably during all his youth, he conceived of the kingdom of God as being prepared for by the renunciation of wealth.

But he no more concerned himself with socialism than with polities. One might sometimes wish that the true practice of the Gospel might be found in the fulfilment of certain social duties, and that doing good to the poor might serve to found the kingdom of God. It is not so, except so far as love for the poor and the practice of good deeds proceed from a higher life, and are the natural fruit of regeneration of the new birth. All Christian duty is not comprised in social duty.

Yet it is none the less true that in Jesus' view the great sign of the Messiah

¹ Matt. xix. 21; Mark x. 21 f., 29, 30; Luke xviii. 22 f.

was "the Gospel preached to the poor."¹ This, according to him, was its highest proof. This is evident, since all ranks were to change places in the kingdom. Those who are called the world, the doctors, the Sadducees, the aristocrats, the priests would not at first pass in; they would enter only when they were changed and had become "as little children."

The child is sacred; ² the kingdom of God is his.³ One must become a child to enter it.⁴ One must receive the kingdom as a little child when it comes,⁵ and even now it is to the children that the Father reveals his secrets.⁶

One day Jesus took a child and set him in the midst of his disciples and said to them: "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁷ The kingdom is for children and for such as are like them."

¹ Matt. xi. 5.

² Matt. xviii. 5, 10, 14; Luke xvii. 2.

³ Matt. xix. 14; Mark x. 14; Luke xviii. 16.

⁴ Matt. xviii. 1 f.; Mark ix. 33 f.; Luke ix. 46 f.

⁵ Mark x. 15.

⁶ Matt. xi. 25; Luke x. 21.

⁷ Matt. xviii. 3; Mark ix. 35, 36; Luke ix. 46-48.

The kingdom is also for the lowly of this world, victims of the rich and the proud. It is, finally, for those who are without,—publicans, people of bad life; for all those who have to suffer the contempt of persons of high position, of those who command, who have much, who are well thought of.

At a later time Jesus went still further, and said that the gospel was for Gentiles and Samaritans,—at a later time, we say; for in this first period of his ministry he was not yet unsectarian, and he shared the notions of those about him with respect of the Gentiles.¹

Meantime the kingdom was, from first to last, the kingdom of the poor, and was prepared for by the exaltation of the poor. This is pure Ebionism. In Jewish society of the first century those were called Ebionim who affected indifference to all

¹ See the following passages: Matt. vi. 32, “After all these things do the Gentiles seek;” vi. 7, “Pray not like the Gentiles;” vii. 6, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs;” xviii. 17, “Let him be unto thee as the Gentile.” Jesus did not become non-sectarian until after his interview with a Canaanitish woman; we shall speak of this evolution of his thought in the eleventh chapter.

exterior advantages, — glory, pomp, honor, and especially money. The Ebionim, who were very pious and thoroughly persuaded of the speedy appearance of the kingdom, were a class marked by humility, gentleness, and resignation, without forming a distinct religious party. It is needless to say that their recruits came almost exclusively from the poorer class; hence their name. At a later time the early Christians were called Ebionites by the Jews, — an irrefragable evidence that Jesus gained most of his early disciples from among them, and that he himself was an Ebionite in these early days of his ministry, when he was still closely attached to the forms and traditions of Judaism. “Woe unto you that are rich,” he said in his teaching, “for ye have received your consolation! Woe unto you that are full now, for ye shall hunger! Woe unto you, ye that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep!”¹ “When thou makest a dinner or a supper . . . bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt

¹ Luke vi. 24 ff.

be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.”¹

“In heaven,” “the recompense,” Jesus was always saying,² “at the resurrection,” “in life eternal,” “in the kingdom;” synonymous expressions all of them, which he borrowed, with the ideas which they expressed, from the Old Testament and the synagogue.

To understand them, and above all to grasp the precise thought of Jesus about the poor, we must bear in mind that for a long time a feverish democratic movement had been fermenting among his people. They read and reread — and Jesus had often read — the numerous passages of the Old Testament where God declares that he is the Avenger of the weak and the oppressed.³ The prophets had always fulminated against the great. In the minds of many, the words “poor” and “gentle,” “humble” and “pious,” had become synonymous, just as “rich” had come to signify “impious, evil-disposed, violent.” These

¹ Luke xiv. 12-14.

² Matt. v. 12, x. 41; Mark ix. 41; Luke vi. 23, 35; etc.

³ Amos ii. 6; Isa. lxiii. 9; Ps. xxv. 9, xxxvii. 11, lxxix. 33.

ideas had long been growing deeper and stronger. The Book of Enoch cursed the rich and powerful.¹ It considers luxury as a crime, and in it the Son of man de-thrones kings.²

In the first century the rich man was the “bad rich man,” and Jesus called money “the mammon of unrighteousness.”³ That was the popular and current term for wealth. It was held to be always unjust and ill-gotten. The rich man who was “clothed in purple and fine linen,” who “fared sumptuously every day,” had already received “his good things,” “his recompense,” “that which was due him,” and therefore in the abode of the dead he would be “in torment;” the poor man, who had been covered with sores, and to whom the rich man had not given even his crumbs to eat, would lie “in Abraham’s bosom” and would be “comforted.” Why? Because he had had “evil things” in his life. Therefore in the life to come compensation would be made him; the one would be “in anguish,” and the other “comforted.”⁴

¹ Chaps. xxiii., xc., c., civ.

² Chap. xlvi. 4-8.

³ Luke xvi. 9.

⁴ Luke xvi. 19 ff.

This doctrine of future compensation had been current since the times of the Maccabees, and it was this which had sustained and consoled the lowly and obscure. Their resignation was made of hope, and they bore their burden with so much the more courage in that they saw by faith the future abode of eternal felicity, the unending banquet where, lying in Abraham's bosom, they should drink the wine of the celestial Passover, which was promised to them forever.

The Ebionite and the poor were, then, reckoned holy and beloved of God. It followed that material poverty, want of money, was held to be closely allied with the sentiment of moral destitution, poverty of spirit. This is why Jesus sometimes said that in order to enter the kingdom one must be "poor" (in money)¹ sometimes that he must be "poor in spirit;"² that is, poor in his own mind, his own judgment, humble and repentant.

This preference for those whom the world despises was a distinctive feature of Jesus' character. He had pity on the weakness and powerless-

¹ Luke vi. 20.

² Matt. v. 3.

ness of the lowly. He ardently loved the people and all that was of the people,¹ surpassing his contemporaries in this respect, and setting himself against the national aspirations after domination. The Ebionite desired the coming of the kingdom because then he would become rich, would command in his turn, and humiliate the proud who now humiliated him. Jesus never accepted such a doctrine. If for him true greatness was in serving, it was not in the least because serving would lead in the end to being served. His conscience, enlightened by incessant communion with the Father, transformed and spiritualized the material and earthly notions of his compatriots.

No doubt he believed and said that when the kingdom should come, righteousness would reign and the lowly would be happy; but they were to be happy while remaining lowly, while in the opinion of most of the Jews it was the strong, the able, the violent, who were to reign. The Pharisees entirely expected to be first, and we have already had occasion to say that their sole purpose in strictly carrying out

¹ Matt. ix. 36; Mark vi. 34.

the most minute prescriptions of the Law was to secure to themselves good places in the kingdom. Jesus preached the contrary.

Yet it cannot be denied that he appropriated the doctrine of compensation. In the last centuries before his birth the idea had spread abroad that God could not have imposed the burden of life upon the poor, the afflicted, the lowly, without preparing for them compensation in the future kingdom and at the resurrection of the just, in which they would certainly have part. Jesus made his own this idea, which was based upon faith in the justice of God. There was to be a distributive justice,—a statement which is the profound reason of the Beatitudes.¹ Men said, “In a little while the deliverance;” Jesus repeated it with unalterable conviction. Yet a little while and the future would be changed into present, sorrow would be changed into joy, tears into laughter, suffering into endless well-being. Thence the hope, full of confidence and gayety, which filled all the first period of his ministry.

We may thus sum up in a few words the

¹ Matt. v. 3 ff.

earliest preaching of Jesus upon the kingdom of God.¹ He understood by kingdom a condition of things to come, an ideal life, supraterrestrial, but realized on earth when the Messiah should assume his place of authority. This kingdom of God, which he preferred to call the kingdom of heaven, because it was then in heaven and was to come down from thence, would be the abode, on the transformed earth, of those who should be judged worthy to enter therein.

Jesus, then, taught nothing different from his contemporaries. Yet he differentiated himself from them by saying that no one would enter the kingdom as a matter of right, that he must be prepared by conversion to enter at a future day. The poor were nearer to conversion than the rich. But the rich were not shut out from it,—they must make themselves materially and morally poor,—and the poor were not certain of it, for if they were already lowly in social position they must add to this external poverty poverty of spirit,—poverty in a spiritual and moral sense. He himself,

¹ In our last volume we shall have to speak of Jesus' final idea of the kingdom of God.

the Messiah, was charged with this preparatory work for all, rich and poor.

The Jews held that the kingdom would have no other preparation than external miracles, signs from heaven impressing every one with their marvellous character. Jesus refused these signs from heaven.¹ More than this, the whole nation, according to the Pharisees, had a right to the kingdom and were sure to enter it; the only preparation required was obedience to the Law and submission to Pharisaic tradition.² Jesus preached precisely the reverse.

At a later time the Rabbis taught a purely spiritual and moral kingdom of God, but in the time of Jesus such a thing was not thought of. The state of heart would prepare for the kingdom, but was not the kingdom itself, the era of happiness, the universal palingenesis which Jesus at first firmly hoped to produce during his life. This entirely religious hope was of a fundamentally Israelitish and national character, especially in the earlier period of his ministry. As we have said, Jesus was not yet unsectarian.

¹ Matt. xii. 38 f., xvi. 1 f.; Mark viii. 11.

² *Sanh.* fol. xxvii. 2.

Finally, the socialism of Jesus, if we may so much as use the word, was the reverse of the socialism of to-day. The absurd dream of our modern Utopia-makers is to impoverish the rich in order to enrich the poor and establish an equality of fortune which will make everybody comfortable. Jesus preached equality in abnegation and poverty for all men. While with many of our contemporary socialists the object is to become rich, have possessions, enjoy, his was to become poor, empty oneself, suffer,—yes, suffer; for in his view happiness consists in submission to the Father's will, humility of spirit is the true greatness, and oneness in suffering the true equality,—the only equality possible, the only equality to be desired.

CHAPTER VIII

JOURNEYS TO JERUSALEM

EVERY year Jesus made several obligatory journeys to Jerusalem. He had always made them ; he had thus been able a long time back to form an opinion concerning the Sadducees, the Temple, and the worship which was celebrated there. We believe that his convictions in this respect date at latest from the time immediately preceding his entrance upon his ministry.

Like every true Pharisee and every serious Essene, he had separated himself from Sadduceeism. Nevertheless he had retained a hope of succeeding even with the Sadducees ; and it seems to us certain that before deciding upon Capernaum, on the border of the lake, he had tried to make himself known in Jerusalem.

It is easy to understand that the capital would particularly attract him, and that he did not resolve to shut himself up in the narrow canton of Galilee until he had

failed in the centre itself ; he could not lose the hope of being one day welcomed in that place, for no success would be final for his purpose except as he should succeed in the Holy City. Jerusalem was what he needed to conquer ; and when she was gained, the rest of the country would soon be his. Therefore he did not settle upon the lake shore until Jerusalem had been closed to him.

It is true that the traditional Gospels know only the ministry in Galilee, with the exception of the last week ; but the Gospel of St. John has preserved for us the very clear memory of several undertakings of Jesus at Jerusalem, most of them in the early part of his ministry, precisely at the time when the desire to speak and act at the very centre of the nation would naturally be in his heart. Everything, therefore, leads us to believe that the indications of the fourth Gospel are in this respect, as in others, entirely historical. Jesus began his work, not in Galilee, but in Jerusalem ; and this is one of the many touches which reveal the eye-witness revising the errors of the synoptical tradition.

It is again remarkable that John places the purification of the Temple at its true date. It was an act of inauguration ; and the first three Gospels, which know only of a single journey to Jerusalem, although they insist upon several,¹ are forced to place the purification of the Temple in this single visit, and relegate it to the last week, to a time which is highly improbable.²

In one of his early journeys to Jerusalem, long before all that ministry in Galilee which we have already narrated, Jesus had driven the merchants from the Temple, because, like every true Pharisee and every true Essene, he was outraged by the profanation of the sanctuary.

He expelled the sellers in the Temple court because they had no right there ; he desired them to install themselves outside the doors. Their presence in the Court of

¹ Matt. xxiii. 37. Observe particularly the word *ποσδεῖς*.

² I say nothing of the singular opinion of those who believe in two purifications of the Temple, — one at the opening, the other at the close of Jesus' ministry, — that weak invention of the harmonists who, in spite of their protestations, are the slaves of their invincible belief in the infallibility of the Bible.

the Gentiles was an insult to God; they changed "a house of prayer" into a "den of thieves."

Moreover, we are permitted to suppose that Jesus did not simply object to the fact that they were installed in one place and not in another, but that up to a certain point he objected to their presence itself. It is certain that, save the Paschal lamb (the patriotic and family feast, which he greatly prized), Jesus seems never to have offered a sacrifice in the Temple. He loved to recall the word of Jehovah in Hosea, saying, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Besides, sacrifices had fallen into discredit. None of the Jews "of the Dispersion" offered or could offer them. These were none the less pious for that, none the less devoted to the Law, none the less thoroughly true Jews. Jesus acted in the character of a liberal Jew, an anti-Sadducean Pharisee, when he drove the merchants out of the Temple; and this act was certainly approved by the Pharisees, at the same time that it brought him under the disapproval of the official authorities. But in performing it and in opposing sacrifices, Jesus only carried out the

teaching of Isaiah, when he wrote these words:—

“ What have I to do with the multitude of your sacrifices, says Jehovah :
I am satiated with holocausts of rams, and the fat of calves.
I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, of sheep, and of goats.
When you come to present yourselves before me,
Who requires it of you to trample my courts?
Cease to bring vain offerings.
I have a horror of incense,
New moons, Sabbaths, and assemblies ;
I cannot look upon iniquity and the solemn meeting ;
My soul hates your new moons and your feasts,
They are a burden to me,
I am weary of bearing them.
When you spread forth your hands, I turn away mine eyes ;
When you multiply prayers, I do not listen.
Your hands are full of blood ;
Wash you, make you clean,
Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes.
Cease to do evil,
Learn to do well, seek justice,

Protect the oppressed,
Procure justice for the orphan,
Defend the widow.
Come, let us plead together, saith Jehovah.”¹

From the time that these words were written the Temple was doomed to disappear.

The ardent apostrophes of Isaiah, and other similar passages of the Book of the Prophets, were read and re-read by the Pharisees, by the Ebionites, by all who felt religious longings and failed to find their satisfaction in the ceremonies of the Temple ; and a separation had long been made between these and the aristocratic Sadducees. It was necessary to choose either the latter or the liberal Pharisees ; Jesus had long since made his choice, and the purification of the Temple aroused against him the hatred of the priests. On that day he perceived that from this quarter he was certain to encounter an invincible opposition. He was indeed too independent to succeed in a circle so narrowly restricted and unintelligently conservative. A saying of his at the time of the expulsion of

¹ Isa. i. 11-18 (Segond’s French translation).

the merchants was seized upon, distorted, and characterized as blasphemy.¹

From this time Jesus was obliged to give up the thought of an immediate attempt upon the holy city; but he continued dutifully to show himself there three or four times a year, on festal occasions, and in any case in the month Nisan, at the Passover.

He was strongly attached to the Passover pilgrimage, to which he had been accustomed from childhood. He and his disciples used to go up together to the capital; and the little company, unobserved in the enormous multitudes of the festival days, would keep the Paschal feast and observe all the accustomed rites. They would light the Sabbath lamp,—as indeed they did every week, but with more solemnity on this day. The spiritual family, made up of the apostles and the Master, would gather around the unleavened bread, and would sing together with full voices the old patriotic and religious songs which they had known by heart from childhood.

Jesus made no use of these short visits to again attempt to make himself known.

¹ John ii. 19 f.

He clearly saw that the hour for speaking in the porticos of the Temple had not yet come, and that to resume his former attempt would be useless. St. John has preserved the memory of an interview which in one of his earlier visits he had with a Pharisee of note named Nicodemus.¹ The words then exchanged between him and his interlocutor no doubt also served to show him that any attempt upon a society so unintelligent in religious things would be entirely useless, at least at that time.

We must say more. The annual visits of Jesus to Jerusalem had their influence in separating him from Judaism, at least from a certain kind of Judaism. From these visits came the first light on this subject; they made him understand how little of a Jew he was, and that day by day he was becoming less of one. Besides, he had failed there and he had a work to do in Galilee. It was already begun, it offered bright hopes; it was the work to pursue.

At Jerusalem, side by side with Sadduceeism, there reigned a strict union of formalism and fanaticism, that is to say,

¹ John iii. 1 ff.

Pharisaism inspired by a most detestable spirit, than which there can hardly be anything more repulsive in the world.

Jesus saw persons passing along the streets whom he afterward described to his hearers in Galilee. Here is one, emaciated by fasting, heaving profound sighs, moving painfully, thus to exaggerate his appearance of fatigue and exhaustion, and exhibiting to the public a face as of an exhumed corpse. Here is another, who throws a corner of his mantle over his head above his turban, so as not to be distracted by the sight of passing women; in consequence he sees nothing, and bumps himself against the walls. Another, standing at a street corner or at a crossing in order to be well seen, turns his face to the wall, and lifts up his voice; he is praying, telling God how he pays his tithes and sets an example of all the virtues; a fourth walks bent double, his head as low as possible, paying heed to nothing, because he is absorbed in meditation on a difficult text. One can imagine the indignation with which such sights inspired Jesus. "Oh, the hypocrites!" he would say when he saw them; "they have received their reward!"

Among themselves, in their schools, these worthies were forever deep in casuistries which bristled with minute points. These were the doctors of occult learning, a most accurate notion of which may be gained from almost any page of the Talmud. They carried on discussions of most absurd puerility, interminable successions of solemn trivialities without the slightest moral value, filling with pride those who devoted themselves to these so-called studies, and closing their minds to such a degree that these barbarous absurdities appeared to them as the natural and serious occupation of grave and respectable persons.

There was not, and there could not be, a single point of contact between Jesus and these Jerusalemites. Besides, Galileans were a despised folk. The disdain which Jesus had already been aware of when at the age of twelve years he accompanied Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem for the first time, he had felt more and more acutely every year. Their accent was laughed at; they were considered unorthodox; they were deemed ignorant and somewhat ridiculous.

And then the ideas of Jesus had decidedly changed. The Temple, where at the age of twelve he had enjoyed such sweet and pure emotions, to such a degree that he called what he was doing “occupying himself with the things of his Father,”¹ and where he had lingered, forgetful of everything else,— the Temple, to remain in which then seemed to him the supreme happiness, had become to him the symbol of all that was to disappear. The very building itself was to be destroyed. In vain had it been rebuilt, in vain did the priesthood hope for it a long future. Jesus perceived that nothing of all that was destined to last long. Sadduceeism would pass away, he said to himself ; and its abode, the Temple, would also pass away. He who often repeated, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice,”² could not look upon the Temple in another light than that of the Pharisees themselves, and the latter had for a very long time held it as of slight consequence.

Ah, yes, if it had continued to be what it ought to have been, Jesus would have made it his chosen habitation ! Even in its decadence he still loved it, for it was

¹ Luke ii. 49.

² Hos. vi. 6.

still his Father's house, a "house of prayer;" and though it might have become the arena of discussions, disputes, and subtle questions, he still made it his centre on all his visits. But what he saw there deeply pained him. In the court were stalls, mercantile operations, all the movement and traffic of a bazaar; for it is needless to say that the expulsion which he effected was followed by no enduring result. Before the sanctuary were hideous scenes of butchery, and among the Temple servants an irreligious vulgarity which wounded his pious feelings. This debased priesthood did not seem to him the inheritors of the ancient traditions. The true heirs were those spiritually minded ones who carried forward the first chapter of Isaiah, and were inspired with its prophetic utterances.

"To love God and one's neighbor is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."¹ This the Scribes of his time loudly proclaimed. Much more was Jesus convinced of it. The synagogue, with its orators, its liberty of preaching, appeared to him far more serious and important than

¹ Mark xii. 33.

the mechanical ritualistic functions of indifferent and formalizing priests.

There were then, so to speak, two Judaisms, growing ever wider and wider apart. On one side the men of the Talmuds, the learned men, laics all of them, rulers of the synagogue and belonging to the Pharisaic party. On the other side the priests, occupying an elevated rank, rulers of the Temple and even of the Sanhedrin, forming an incredulous, Epicurean, almost impious aristocracy, a sacerdotal caste apart from the people and the national sentiment represented by the Zealots, who were enthusiastic laymen. The Sadducees would have no innovators nor innovations; the official routine sufficed for them. It was they first who detached Jesus from Judaism. The sight of the irreligion and moral carelessness of those who were in possession of the Temple itself, the haughty impiety of those who represented the race of Aaron, first began to persuade Jesus of the necessity of abrogating the Law.

Luther lost all his illusions at Rome. In the same way Jesus learned much from his visits to Jerusalem. His rupture with

the Temple preceded his rupture with the Pharisees. It must, then, have been effected during the visits which he made to the holy city during his Galilean ministry; and this first separation marks his entrance upon the second phase of his ministry,— for it was soon followed by the second.

Up to this time he had been a Jewish reformer; henceforth he was to be the destroyer of Judaism. The latter, under its sacerdotal form, inspired in him a repugnance with which its Pharisaic form was shortly also to inspire him. It was necessary that the sacrifices should be abolished. The fulfilling, of which he often spoke, would in this case be an abolition. Here again Jesus adheres to Essenism, and develops an idea which he received from the Essenes, for they were entirely indifferent to the Temple, all of them considering it as impious and profaned.

On his return to Galilee after these journeys to Jerusalem, Jesus used to resume his work of preparation for the kingdom; but we have now arrived at a time where he could not again resume it: the rupture with the Pharisees was now in

its turn about to be precipitated. Jesus was to separate himself from them. In fact, he had for a long time been separate from them. He had thought himself still of their number, doing nothing else than accentuate the liberality of the best among them. But now he perceived to what an extent he actually repudiated them, and with them all Judaism.

CHAPTER IX

OPPOSITION TO JESUS

JESUS preached a long time in Galilee without encountering the slightest opposition. Rabbis were going about the country ; he was one of them ; they were all free, and no preacher was disturbed by any one in the exercise of his ministry. Exhortations and cures attracted some people and left others indifferent, and the little Jewish world none the less went on its every-day life.

But the success of Jesus was such that at last it excited both jealousy and fear. On certain days the people came in crowds to hear him.¹ Certain Pharisees who had been far from attaining such success, saw all this with displeasure ; and from this to finding Jesus in error, insisting that his success was not sound, and investigating his life, discovering in it omission of rites

¹ Matt. iv. 25 ; Mark ii. 4 ; Luke v. 1, viii. 4, 19, xi. 29, xii. 1 ; etc.

and errors of practice or of doctrine, was not very far. Jesus perceived that he was being spied upon, suspected ; that his liberality was criticised ; and the time came when he was obliged to hide himself.¹

He had already been repelled from Nazareth ; and he had certainly been very sensitive to the aloofness of his own compatriots. The Nazarenes, who had known him as a child, persisted in remaining unbelieving. They had seen Jesus grow up in their village ; they remembered the carpenter's bench, his sisters were married in the town, his brothers did not believe,² and decidedly he could not be a prophet in his own country : he admitted that himself. On the border of the lake, Chorazin and Bethsaida had also refused to yield to him.³ But it was above all from the Pharisees that gradually came the most overt opposition, that which was destined to take on formidable proportions and pursue Jesus to the very end.

In the presence of this new opposition,

¹ Matt. xiii. 14-16 ; Mark iii. 7, ix. 29, 30.

² John vii. 5.

³ Matt. xi. 21, 24 ; Luke x. 12-15 ; Matt. xii. 41, 42 ; Luke xi. 31, 32, xviii. 8.

the tokens of hostility which we have already seen count for nothing. When Jesus was repelled at Jerusalem, it was only by Sadduceeism, a form of Jewish faith which had no strength and no future. When he failed at Nazareth, it was as the consequence of local animosity resting on private motives. But the rupture with the Pharisees was the rupture with Judaism itself, of all in it that was most vital and authentic.

Up to this time — and this is the character of this first period of his ministry — Jesus, as we have said and shown, had remained in the great current of the best Pharisaic ideas. He had pursued a parallel work with that of the Pharisees, in no sense hostile to it, but on the contrary affording numerous points of contact with it; but little by little the resemblance had been effaced. In reality, for a long time Jesus had been little by little detaching himself from Pharisaism without in any wise intending it, believing himself to be faithful to the true spirit of the religion of his people, persuaded that he was destroying nothing, but fulfilling all things. From this time he perceived that the spirit which

animated him and the reform which he desired were not in the least conformable to the hopes of his people, and especially of those who led them, the Pharisees.

On the one hand, his success was increasing; on the other, that which divided him from the old Judaism was growing sharper, a separation was inevitable.

In fact, the formalism of the Pharisees had always displeased him. He had at all times disapproved of the vain practices and affectations of many among them.¹ He preached the religion of the heart, and his whole law was the love of God, charity, forgiveness.² We have said that he established no religious practice; that if he later instituted Baptism and the Eucharist, still for the moment he desired only a heart-religion which should show itself by fulfilling the will of God and not by exterior mechanical practices.³ He remained true to the tradition of the prophet Isaiah. That book was certainly among his chosen reading, and we do not dispute that more

¹ Matt. xv. 9, ix. 14, xi. 19, vi. 2 ff.

² Matt. xxii. 37 f.; Mark xii. 28 f.; Luke x. 25 f.

³ Matt. xv. 8; Mark vii. 6; borrowed from Isa. xxix. 13.

than one of the Pharisees secretly approved of him.

But he was decidedly too liberal for the majority of them, and he became more and more so all the time. Concerning the Sabbath in particular, he was more than liberal ; he openly violated it.¹ Not that he rejected it in itself, but he rejected the superstitious beliefs and the miserable casuistry of which its observance was the source.

The same was the case with ablutions and the interminable discussions concerning what is pure and what is impure.² Finally, he explicitly accused the Pharisees ; he called them “blind leaders of the blind,” and declared that they were “inwardly corrupt.”³

Let us make clear the points upon which Jesus squarely separated himself from Pharisaism. He said that it was the heart which must be changed : with the Pharisees observances sufficed. They were satisfied, sure of themselves, laying emphasis on external things, austere in a

¹ Matt. xii. 1-5 and parallel passages.

² Mark vii. 1 ff.

³ Matt. xii. 34, xv. 1 f., xxiii. ; Luke vi. 45, xi. 39 f.

somewhat narrow way, making veritable dupes of their disciples. Jesus preached to the poor, the humble, the lowly ; and the Pharisees had a religion for people of standing. They were impeccable pedants, always in the right ; they took the chief seats in the synagogues, and did their alms to the sound of the trumpet. Jesus required humility and fear in view of the judgment of God, and the Pharisees prayed aloud, dragging their feet and stumbling at the stones, walking with bended backs, overwhelmed with the burden of the Law.

It was especially the Pharisees of the school of Shammai who kept at a distance from Jesus, and from whom Jesus also kept at a distance. Agreeing with them on a single point, divorce, Jesus certainly preferred the Pharisees of the school of Hillel. The disciples of Shammai were narrow and exclusive ; they stifled the Law under tradition, and in the interest of its protection surrounded it with a hedge. Their conservative measures were feeble and outworn precautions, which could not but arouse the repugnance of every one who had any degree of breadth of mind.

Thus it was that Jesus felt the bonds to be breaking, one by one, that up to this time had held him to the Judaism of his day. The synagogue which he had frequented and loved, the worship practised by his mother, the worship which had entranced his childhood and which indeed he never entirely gave up,¹ were no longer for him what they had once been. It was impossible that he should not find the worship hollow and the teaching a tissue of error. And it was these Pharisees who were the leaders of it,—the Pharisees on whom he had so strongly counted!

Henceforth he would struggle against official hypocrisy, opposing text to tradition. Theology, as it develops, always goes farther and farther from its starting-point. Jesus showed the Pharisees that they must go back to the authorities and hold fast by the texts; the Protestants were to do the same thing in the sixteenth century.²

But he did more, and the exegetical argument was not the essential one in his eyes. Before appealing to texts he had

¹ Luke iv. 16, “according to his custom.”

² Matt. xv. 2 ff.; Mark vii. 2.

appealed to the authority of his conscience. As early as the Sermon on the Mount, as we showed in our former volume, he opposed to the text itself his “But *I* say unto you.”¹ If the Pharisees altered Mosaism with their traditions, he did not simply refer everything to Moses, nor simply restore the old religion. He did not put new wine into old wine-skins.² He created a new order of things, a new and final religion. Decidedly he not only separated himself from the Judaism of his time, but from the ancient Law, the Torah itself.

Yet the Pharisees did not attack him upon that point. His “I say unto you” might pass for an interpretation, a commentary; and they themselves made the like. True first-century Jews, what especially grieved them was that Jesus did not observe the rites. He might think as he liked, but the intolerable thing was that he did not practise. What! he did not fast! He did not refrain from a single one of the thirty-nine works forbidden on the Sabbath day! He associated with sinners, continually contracted uncleannesses, and

¹ Matt. v. 22, 28, 34, etc.

² Matt. ix. 17; Mark ii. 22; Luke v. 38.

did not so much as dream of perceiving it! And he required nothing of his disciples, taught them nothing of what is permitted and what forbidden, and the apostles never fasted!¹ What! no ablutions, no complete bath before meals! He said, "Give alms, and all things are clean unto you."² What a scandal! The Pharisees were ruffled to the last degree. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican carried their exasperation to a climax.³

Their hatred increased in direct proportion to the increasing aloofness of Jesus from Judaism. It is certain that he was by this time hardly a Jew, and that at bottom he had always been very little a Jew. When he uttered the Sermon on the Mount, spiritualizing Pharisaism and interpreting the Law in its largest sense, he believed himself to be in the great current of authentic Judaism; he expected to preserve it by reforming it. Therefore he affirmed that not one jot should pass without being fulfilled, but fulfilled in his own way,

¹ Matt. xv. 1 ff.; Mark vii. 4, 8; Luke v. 33-39, and vi. 1 ff., xviii. 38 ff.

² Luke xi. 41.

³ Luke xviii. 9 f.

fulfilled after having been transformed; and, rising from the act to the sentiment which dictated it, he thought himself to be professing true Mosaism. We have already compared him to Luther protesting against indulgences, convinced that he was doing the work of a good Catholic, certain that the Pope would approve of him, yet soon to be cast out and excommunicated. This was logical, for he had not for a long time been a Catholic. In the same way Jesus, preaching a change of heart, saying that the act itself was nothing, appealing to the moral sense, was no longer a Jew; for practice and the deed performed are the very essence of Judaism.

Thus Jesus and the Pharisees engaged in an open conflict. The latter accused Jesus of casting out demons by the prince of demons.¹ The attack was brutal; it began with the most odious of calumnies and the most offensive of insults. The accusation that Jesus was inspired by Satan recalls the accusation formulated in the Middle Ages in the words, "He has sold his soul to the Devil," — so truc

¹ Matt. xii. 24; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15.

it is that clerical hatred is the same in all times.¹

¹ In his reply Jesus seems to admit that the kingdom of God is present. We have already explained this passage, but it is useful to recur to it here. Jesus first said, "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Matt. xii. 28; Luke xi. 20). This passage does not signify that the kingdom is already founded, but simply that it is imminent. The kingdom has come *ἐφ' ἡμᾶς*. The term expresses a menace, something that is to happen. The kingdom confronts you with its chastisements. You are living immediately before its coming. This fact, that demons are to-day cast out by me with the aid of God, proves the speedy appearance of the kingdom; you have come face to face with it, and it is close by. The same was the case when the Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom would appear (Luke xvii. 20), and he replied, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! for lo, the kingdom of God is in your midst." Here Jesus said: The kingdom of God is not being prepared for by exterior signs, miracles, portents, as you Pharisees suppose: there will no doubt be great signs at the last hour, catastrophes and terrible woes; but all that will happen only when hearts are ready. When men are prepared to enter the kingdom, when they are changed, born anew, become as little children, poor, simple,—transformations which are not visible,—then the kingdom will appear without development, suddenly, without precursory signs, like the thief in the night. The premonitory signs will be purely moral, and by these signs, which already exist, the kingdom is announced; it is virtually present in my person. There will be no

Jesus replied by making use of a weapon which he wielded as he alone could do,—irony. It is seldom that there is no ill-nature in irony. There was none in the irony of Jesus; it was holy because it was always just and always merited. Therefore it touched the heart, and the Jews never recovered from it. The ridicule which attaches to their name dates from the day when Jesus said to one of them, “Which of these three, *thinkest thou*, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?”¹ Or again, “Many good works have I shown you . . . for *which of those works* do ye stone me?”² “Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or *to do harm*? to save a soul, or *to destroy it*? ”³ “Is one a debtor when he swears by the Temple? or must he swear by the gold of the Temple-sign which men can observe and say, “Here is the kingdom,” for I am the true sign, it is I whom you must observe and listen to. No other proof will be given you than my own person. That we must not understand by these words that the kingdom of God is present and founded, is proved by the witness of the fact that everywhere else, before and after this moment, Jesus announces the kingdom as *to come*. (Matt. xix. 23; Mark x. 23, 25; Luke xviii. 24, 25.)

¹ Luke x. 36.

² John x. 32.

³ Luke vi. 9.

ple? ¹ by the altar, or by the gift that is upon it?" — childish casuistry upon which Jesus poured out his scorn. His blows were mortal, and the Pharisees allied themselves with the Herodians to bring about his very death. Their hatred could be gratified by no less. They banded themselves together; in face of a common enemy adversaries become friends. The day would come when Pilate and Herod would become friends; and already the Pharisees, "the pure," were making an agreement with spies in the pay of Antipas; to-morrow they would come to an agreement with the Sadducees, whom in the depths of their hearts they execrated. From this time they had only one thought: "Death to the innovator!"

Jesus soon became aware of an incipient unpopularity, which could not but increase. He asked himself what could be the outcome of this opposition. Failure and defeat, even his own premature passing away, did not seem to him impossible. Once, when he was asked why his disciples did not fast,² he compared himself in his answer to

¹ Matt. xxiii. 16.

² Mark ii. 18 ff. and parallel passages.

a bridegroom, saying sadly, “The day will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away!”¹ It was only a passing surmise, but its significance is clear. This allusion is the first; Jesus then foresaw a possible violent death. Up to this time all had been beautiful like a joyful marriage feast. “We have not fasted,” the happy and peaceful disciples had been able to say; and here was the master, the bridegroom, saying, “I shall be taken away from you!” This taking away, this disappearance, seemed to him, if not certain, at least as very possible.

Jesus retained a few personal friends among the Pharisees, but the bulk of the party became more and more unfavorable and hostile to him, and he separated himself from them continually more and more.

His Messianic ideas began, in their turn, to change their character. To the exterior drama now beginning corresponded henceforth an interior drama which nothing in history at all resembles. First the possibility, then the extreme probability, and finally the certainty of a violent and ap-

¹ *ἀπαρθῆ*. Mark ii. 20.

proaching death,—such was the new element which was about to enter into his previsions of the future; and as his conviction that he was the Messiah never weakened for an instant, as the certitude of this which he had gained at his baptism was final and unalterable, he began to conceive of a Messiah who might be persecuted and put to death, and, consequently, who might disappear before the advent of the kingdom. The association of these two ideas was something so strange and unheard of,—a violent death on one side, and Messianism on the other,—it was so far outside of all that a Jew of that time could conceive or imagine, that it is impossible for us to picture to ourselves the interior struggles which Jesus must have gone through, the painful surprises, the acts of abnegation, and the immensity of the sacrifice to which he was called. To give up all that he had believed, hoped, understood! For long years he had believed, he had known, himself to be the Messiah; he had the very clear consciousness that he had to perform a Messianic, that is to say, a royal task; and this idea had been for him absolutely exclusive of that of suffering. And yet

he came at last to accept suffering and premature death, a death above all others ignominious and infamous. Ah! it is certain that we shall never sound the depths of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus.

CHAPTER X

INSTITUTION OF THE APOSTOLATE

WHEN these dark presentiments awoke, Jesus remained as secure as ever of the accomplishment of his task. Never a shadow of doubt, of his Father or of his mission or of himself, darkened his soul.

The nation rejected him; so let it be. Well, he would cut loose from it; and he decided to found a society of disciples whom he would send forth to prepare for the coming of the kingdom. When that should appear, the twelve tribes would be restored;¹ therefore it was necessary that these continuators of his work, the future heads of the national kingdom, should be twelve in number. Jesus chose them from among the best of his disciples, and gave them the name of apostles. Some of them, who had been especially faithful, were naturally designated: the two brothers,

¹ Matt. xix. 28: Luke xxii. 30.

Bene Johanan,¹ and the two brothers, Bene Zebedaiou,² were closely attached to him; eight others, expressly selected by him, were added to these. It was not solely a sort of army of goodness which he created in order that immediately after his death the budding Church should be guided according to his Spirit, and the kingdom continually announced; it was a new and unknown institution which suddenly appeared, and by its mere existence consecrated the rupture of Jesus with Judaism. It created a veritable schism.

Jesus so deeply felt the gravity of the resolution which he was making, that he passed the night in prayer.³ It was on a mountain which had taken the place of the one near Nazareth whither for so many years he had gone to adore his Father; it overlooked Capernaum and the entire lake. During long hours he sought to know the will of God, setting before his sight his new project, his fears, his hopes, and the choice of the Twelve which he was about to make.

The next morning he designated them

¹ Andrew and Peter. ² James and John.

³ Luke vi. 12.

and gave them his instructions. The Sermon on the Mount has preserved to us some scattered fragments of the discourse which he addressed to them. It is difficult to find in this collection of utterances, which do not always follow logically, the clear echo of what Jesus must have said to them at this decisive hour. He recommended to them humility, gentleness, graciousness. He said to them: "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world; a city set upon a hill cannot be hid."¹ It was necessary for them to become "children of the Father which is in heaven."² He preached to them a "higher righteousness,"³ and said to them, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."⁴ To these principles of pure morality, placing before their eyes for goal the new righteousness, divine sonship, perfection itself, Jesus added neither rite nor rule, and asked of the Twelve no practice. Later he added to these first precepts a short prayer,⁵ according to the custom of the Rabbis of that

¹ Matt. v. 13 ff.

² Matt. v. 45.

³ Matt. v. 20.

⁴ Matt. v. 48.

⁵ Matt. vi. 9 ff.; Luke xi. 1 ff.

time, which was probably to be recited immediately after the Shema. For if Jesus imposed no new act of worship, he did not abolish those of which the Twelve and himself had long had the habit; and if he suppressed fasts and ablutions, he always frequented the synagogue and recited the customary prayers.

Jesus also gave the Twelve special instructions. He took care that they should always know the hidden meaning of the parables, and he had secrets with them which they were never to communicate to any one.

No doubt Jesus preached to the crowds and was understood by every one. Airs of mystery were always foreign to him, and his teaching has nothing esoteric. Yet there are certain things which he said "in the darkness," and "in the ear" of the Twelve.¹ In all this he followed the doctors and Rabbis of his time. The parables themselves, as we showed when speaking of the language which Jesus made use of, were in some degree enigmatic. If they put the highest religious verities within

¹ Matt. x. 26, 27; Mark. iv. 21 ff.; Luke viii. 17, xii. 2 ff.; John xiv. 22.

reach of the humblest and the common folk, they did so only by heightening their curiosity, without always gratifying it. They were far from being immediately comprehensible; sometimes the vulgar did not immediately seize the sense, and Jesus, who wanted the Twelve to comprehend this always, would explain the parables to them in detail when he was alone with them.¹

Finally he sent them out two by two, for he still desired to save his people by the word, and stir up a religious and moral transformation of their nation. The apostles were to divide among themselves the twelve tribes, none others; their whole mission was to save the Jews: it is the apostolate of the circumcision, as St. Paul called it at a later time.²

The Twelve then went about preaching during the lifetime of Jesus;³ they confined themselves to announcing the approaching coming of the kingdom,⁴ repeated the Master's teachings, and, like him,

¹ Matt. xiii. 10 ff., 34 ff., iv. 10 ff., 33 ff.; Luke viii. 9 ff., xii. 41.

² Gal. ii. 7.

³ Luke ix. 6.

⁴ Matt. x. 7; Luke x. 9.

performed cures. Their manners and customs were purely Essenian; nowhere in the gospel is the identity of budding Christianity with Essentism more striking. All the counsels as to conduct which Jesus gave them are those which were given to Essenes about to travel,—to stop at the houses of brethren only, to pronounce the Selam, or greeting of peace, on entering, and by this sign to recognize true friends. By this salutation of peace they themselves were to accept hospitality.¹ They were to carry no provisions, no change of garments; a single tunic, a single pair of sandals, was to suffice. All this is the purest Essentism. Let them go neither to the Gentiles nor the Samaritans; let them practise medicine, heal the sick, cast out demons, cleanse lepers, and let them do it all freely.²

In the view of Jesus the apostle was himself; and this he said in his instructions to the Twelve.³ This creation of the apostolate therefore proves two things:

¹ Matt. x., *passim*.

² Matt. x. 8.

³ Matt. x. 40–42, xxv. 35 f.; Mark ix. 40; Luke x. 16; John xiii. 20.

1. The desire of Jesus, in case of his own disappearance, to remain upon the earth in the person of authentic representatives, charged with the work of completing those preparations for the speedy coming of the kingdom which were to be interrupted by his death; 2. The desire to re-establish the twelve tribes of Israel when the kingdom should appear.

Therefore Jesus communicated only to the Twelve his power to heal, to cast out demons, and to prophesy,¹ — that is to say, his entire function as Rabbi.

The apostles' methods of healing were those of the Essenes, — anointing with oil and the imposition of hands. Their power to handle venomous serpents and drink poisoned beverages with impunity is also mentioned; but the passage in the Gospels which makes this statement is certainly apocryphal,² and such powers were attributed to them only at a later date. It is even evident that their power to heal was limited, and sometimes attended with want of success. Certain cases of possession were too difficult for them; it

¹ Matt. vii. 22, x. 1; Mark iii. 15, vi. 13; Luke x. 17.

² Mark xvi. 18.

sometimes occurred that they had not the needed knowledge and were unaware of the special process required to cast out certain kinds of demons.¹ For some of these prayer was indispensable, and also fasting.

This detail shows that prayer was not always essential to the cure of a possessed person, and that, on the contrary, it was sometimes necessary not only to ask God to expel the evil spirit, but also to practise a more or less prolonged fast,—a thing which Jesus had authorized his disciples to dispense with in ordinary life.²

Though Jesus communicated to his apostles alone the power to heal and to exorcise, it was the case that others attempted to cast out demons in his name without even being his disciples, and we are not told that they did not succeed. When the fact was reported to Jesus, he declared its authorization.³ In fact, all methods were used for delivering those un-

¹ Matt. xvii. 19-21.

² We have already alluded to this passage, and said that the mention of fasting in Matt. xxii. 2, is probably unauthentic (see page 137).

³ Mark ix. 38 ff.; Luke ix. 49, 50.

fortunate persons who were possessed. We have seen above that men went so far as to invoke Beelzebub, the prince of the infernal regions, because, being the devil, he had all power over his subordinates. Thus do superstitions reproduce themselves always the same, and the most ridiculous inventions of the Middle Age were already in existence.

Choosing the Twelve, Jesus founded a church, a community. He admirably understood the importance of action in common, its enormous power, and the invincible strength of union by love.

This church, this community of the Twelve and of all who should join them, was to bind and loose; that is to say, it would have the right to permit and forbid, it could forgive sins, reprimand, warn. But Jesus added no code of rules to these promises and privileges. He gave no indications touching assemblies of believers, and prescribed no ceremonies for the apostles to celebrate. Thus the primitive Church was to be instituted on the model of the synagogue, and the Twelve had no other form of worship than the worship of their fathers.

This is easy to understand. Jesus' only care was to assure the life of his followers during the time which should intervene between his death and the coming of the kingdom, since it was possible that he might die before the kingdom of God should come. And thus, having instituted the apostolate, he confined himself to giving his followers general instructions: he sent them only to the Jews, and it was enough for him to speak such words as would encourage them when he should be no longer in their midst.

They would find their first consolation in the thought that the Holy Spirit was with them. When he, Jesus, should be no longer there, the Spirit would come, and it would be his Spirit, strengthening his own, for he would be always present with his faithful ones, though they might be only two or three gathered together.¹

Such words and counsels were a great source of strength to the apostles when at a later day they recalled them to mind. Jesus had predicted truly, it was the Spirit of God which filled them; never could humanity have produced by itself

¹ Matt. xviii. 20.

the works which they performed; and the supernatural shines forth through the whole history of the primitive Church.

It is needless to say that there is no trace of the ecclesiastical Trinity in the teaching of Jesus, as there is indeed no trace of theology or of a confession of faith. But what St. Paul said at a later day in one of his apostolic salutations,¹ naming successively the grace of the Heavenly Father, the love of Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, and invoking these blessings upon his readers, was clearly drawn from the words of the Christ. The Holy Spirit is not a separate personality (it should be needless to say this, so evident is it); it is himself, Jesus, coming back into the hearts of his disciples to establish his kingdom by their means.

It is impossible not to admit that Jesus was acquainted with Jewish theology, which made of the Holy Spirit a divine hypostasis, and identified it with the Word or Wisdom;² and it is for this reason that

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 13; and what Jesus himself said when he instituted baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

² Wisd. Sol. i. 7, vii. 7, ix. 17, xii. 1; Eccles. i. 9, xv. 5, xxiv. 27, xxxix. 8; Judith xvi. 17.

he insisted upon the Holy Spirit, not only in his teaching as the fourth Gospel gives it, but also in that of the first three. "Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," he said, "shall never be forgiven."¹ "It is not ye who speak, but the Holy Spirit which speaketh for you."² "The Father giveth the Spirit to them that ask him;"³ etc. Such passages abound; and in this there is nothing surprising, for this was the point in Jewish theology to which at that time the greatest importance was attached. In fact, out of this doctrine issued the great question of the relations of God with the world or with intermediary beings; and John the Baptist himself had already spoken of a baptism of fire and of the Spirit.⁴

When Jesus announced the coming of the Holy Spirit, he gave to him in the Syro-Chaldaic tongue a name with which we are acquainted; he called him the Paraclete.⁵ The Jewish doctors had derived this word

¹ Matt. xii. 31, 32; Mark iii. 29; Luke xii. 10.

² Mark xiii. 11; Luke xii. 12.

³ Luke xi. 13.

⁴ Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 26, iii. 5; Acts i. 5, 8, x. 47.

⁵ See Buxtorf, *Lex. Talm.*

from the Greek *parakletos*, which signifies advocate, counsellor, doctor who explains hidden mysteries. The Paraclete was so little a distinct personality that Jesus himself is thus called.¹ The Spirit, the Paraclete, was to replace him; and this would be his Spirit, it would be himself.²

As to a book to which should be committed his teachings, Jesus never spoke of such a thing. We have explained why such a book was far from his thought.³ He had come to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, and not in the least to publish texts to be added to those of the Old Testament.

Finally, he instituted two ceremonies, — Baptism and the Eucharist.⁴ We must reserve this subject for our third volume. But a word must be said here concerning the meals which he took in common with the apostles, and with them alone. We believe that long before the institution of

¹ 1 John ii. 1.

² John xiv. 18.

³ See chapter ii., "The Language of Jesus," page 59 ff.

⁴ It is remarkable that Jesus, with the exception of a few interdictions like that of the oath (Matt. v. 34), or of divorce (xix. 3 f.), never laid down a single rule to be followed.

the Eucharist, which was established only on the last day, Jesus used to partake with the apostles of a meal which had a sacred character. The Pharisees had a habit of fraternal *agape*, with complete ablutions before and afterward, the benediction of each dish, and conversation on religious subjects ; and it is highly possible that the feasts to which Jesus was invited at their houses were of this character.¹

However this may be, there is more than one resemblance between the fraternal feasts of the Pharisees, who had instituted fixed days on which the brotherhood should assemble to take a meal together, and the *agapæ* of the early Christians. The brethren celebrated those *agapæ* as a sign of union. It is therefore more than probable that when in the course of his ministry Jesus presided at the table around which were grouped the Twelve, he gave a special character to the gathering. We see him in St. John, a year before the institution of the Eucharist,² comparing himself to bread which nourishes and gives life ; and, according to certain pas-

¹ Luke v. 29, vii. 36, xi. 37, xiv. 1 ff.

² John vi. 35 ff.

sages, he had a habit of breaking the bread at the beginning of a meal, giving the pieces to his disciples with a prayer of thanksgiving. The gesture which he usually made at such moments was peculiar to him. It might aid in his recognition,¹ and the apostles kept in their minds and their hearts the memory of the solemn moment of "the breaking of bread" by their Master; in the meal which he took with his own it was a sacred moment with a religious character. For that matter, to eat of the same loaf was always, for the Jew, a bond of union and intimacy. A son of Israel did not sit down at the table of a Gentile, precisely because such an act presupposed an entire community of feelings and ideas; and it is to be understood how Jesus, who loved this common meal, who at such moments felt himself most near to his own and most closely united to them, must, at the moment of parting from the apostles, have felt the need of instituting a ceremony, a sacred supper, which would recall to their minds those which they had been used to take together, and which would perpetuate his mystic pres-

¹ Luke xxiv. 31.

ence, since by the Holy Spirit he would be always in their midst.

Jesus must have felt all the more the need of drawing near to his apostles and living with them in close intimacy, in proportion as the rupture with Judaism was drawing daily nearer to its consummation.

This rupture was destined soon to have an important result. Jesus was to become unsectarian. Up to this time he had not been so. He had spoken of Gentiles as strangers, and when he had sent the Twelve forth upon their mission, he had said, “Go not to the Gentiles nor to the Samaritans.” Not long after he used entirely different language, going so far as to say that the Gentiles would pass into the kingdom before the Jews;¹ that the vineyard destined for the children of Israel should be given to others,² and in one of his parables clearly designating the Jews, he makes the king, who represents God himself, say, “None of those who were bidden shall taste of my supper.”³

These were new words, and they reveal

¹ Luke xv. 24 f.

² Matt. xxi. 24, etc.

³ Luke xiv. 24.

long and painful experiences. We are far now from the early time, far from the first preaching on the Lake and on the Mount. Opposition — a formidable opposition — had burst out under the pressure of events. Now the impatience of the people is, in its turn, precipitating these events. Although the change of hearts has not yet been brought about, Jesus makes it understood that he is indeed the Messiah, and his people, who are in no condition to understand the austere spirituality of his Messianism, will follow the Pharisees' example in parting from him. Jesus had already done everything to retard his rupture with the latter. He had hoped to avoid it, and when it took place he had faced all its consequences in creating the apostolate. It was thus that, with admirable energy, a conviction and assurance which nothing could shake, he prepared for the future, for what he called "the hour of the Father," awaiting it with confidence, whatever might be the sacrifice which the Father was to ask of him.

Thus, in his days of endurance, of care and renunciation, the Twelve were for him a hope and consolation. When he

thought of them, he thrilled with joy,¹ he commended them to his Father, he thanked him for having given him these "children," who knew more than the "wise and prudent;" and when they told him of their success, when they said, "Even the demons are subject to us,"² — that is, we have succeeded even in exorcisms, then, indeed, he saw in advance all the victories that were to be gained, — evil forever vanquished, and Satan overthrown appeared to him, like a vision created by his unfaltering optimism, as if falling from heaven and disappearing like a flash of lightning.³

¹ Luke x. 21. ² Luke x. 17. ³ Luke x. 19.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUMMER OF THE YEAR 29¹

JESUS was full of these thoughts when the entirely unexpected news of the death of John the Baptist suddenly surprised him.

Up to this time, in spite of the opposition which he was arousing and the plots which were being formed against him, in spite of the delays to which the apparition of the kingdom seemed to be obliged to submit, he had remained in Galilee, not, doubtless, without solicitude, but expecting the hour of the Father and pursuing his work. The

¹ We do not insist upon the figure 29. The precision of the chronological researches which lead us to adopt it makes it seem probable; but at such a distance from the events, and with the imperfections of the calendar of the ancient Jews, nothing is certain. The essential thing is that we are here concerned with the last year before the death of Jesus. It can be the year 29 only if Jesus died in the year 30.

death of John, so premature, so unexpected, accompanied by such horrible details, came home to him as a solemn warning. The possibility of a tragic and unexpected end was not then a chimera ; he also might disappear and in the same way. Herod began to appear formidable.

A few trusty and faithful friends whom he had kept among the Pharisees came at that very juncture to inform him of certain things said by the Tetrarch about him. Antipas, hearing reports of Jesus and his popularity, had said, "This Jesus is John the Baptist risen from the dead." Now, he who had thus spoken was very powerful, and he was at Tiberias, whither indeed Jesus never went, but which was not far from Capernaum.¹ There was, then, reason to reckon with this dangerous neighbor. No doubt Herod, as unstable as vindictive, would not long think that this was John risen from the dead. But he had spies, sworn friends, certain individuals called the Herodians ;² and Jesus learned that these Herodians had had interviews with certain decidedly hostile Pharisees, on the

¹ Matt. xiv. 1 ff.; Mark vi. 14 ff.; Luke ix. 7 ff.

² Mark iii. 6, xii. 13; Matt. xxii. 16.

subject of himself. They had come to an understanding, something was being plotted; and, instructed by these various events, he formed a new resolution.

First of all, he decided that he would no longer preach in the synagogues. Then he gave up his Capernaum home, only once again to occupy it for a few days or even hours, as he passed through the city. From that time he was to have no settled abode,¹ and he began a wandering ministry, a life of continual journeyings, concerning which we have no exact information. He went first toward the northern frontier. It was a wise precaution. Phœnicia could offer him at need a secure retreat. He was also fond of visiting the eastern shore of the lake; it was a nearly desert country, over which Antipas had no jurisdiction, and the Decapolis in its turn might prove to Jesus a secure and peaceful shelter.

One day, just when he had taken refuge on the eastern shore of the lake, the people came in crowds to find him.

It was to be his last day of popularity, and one of the days in which he showed himself the greatest. The people, who

¹ Matt. viii. 20; Luke ix. 58.

detested Herod, proclaimed Jesus their Messiah, and assigned to him royal honor. What, then, took place in his soul? To be King! To be the national Messiah and acclaimed as such! It was all that he had hoped, all that he had asked. Was, then, the work of preparation which he had begun drawing to its close? No, for the kingdom ought first to come. He was the Messiah, but he was to remain humble and hidden, and confine himself to a work of preparation, so long as the kingdom had not yet appeared. If Jesus had let the people have their way, it would have been a revolt, an armed insurrection,—a second such experiment as that of Judas the Gaulonite, all that he had before refused at the temptation. And so he retired to the mountain, and passed the night in prayer.¹

On the morrow, more than ever decided, he spoke for the last time in the synagogue of Capernaum. Making use of the symbol of the bread, which no doubt he had already explained to the Twelve, he spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood; he promised to satisfy the hunger and thirst of

¹ John vi. 15 ff.

those who came to him. These expressions, being misunderstood, produced a revulsion of feeling in his hearers, and a crisis declared itself, — a formidable crisis, in which the opposition of the people was in its turn made manifest, joining with that of the Pharisees.

As for him, he followed his thought to the end. It was a new thought, and had taken so much the more hold upon him; and, full in the sight of a violent death, which might be its consequence, he drew the comparison of the bread broken and the wine poured out. Before eating bread one breaks it, before drinking wine one pours it out; and thus he completed the figure he had already employed, finding in it a figure of his death. At this moment, without doubt, he had the first thought of a ceremony commemorating his death, if indeed it should be at hand and was to be by violence.

The people refused to hear Jesus to the end; that took place in their minds which always takes place among the populace when hopes have been awakened in them and not satisfied. To popularity succeeds desertion, to enthusiasm hatred. The peo-

ple have these sudden changes of mood; the multitudes accuse those whom they have worshipped of having betrayed and deceived them. To avoid this crisis, Jesus must needs have met them half-way, permitted them to name him king; but he could not. The hopes which he had awakened rested upon a misunderstanding; the misunderstanding was bound to come to light sooner or later, and on this day the inevitable rupture took place. The disappointed multitude abandoned Jesus for always.

He was not for a moment shaken, and yet what a pang and what a warning! He had not succeeded in Galilee; but in that case would he succeed elsewhere? It seemed impossible, and that is why he spoke of the broken flesh and the poured-out blood; and yet who could tell? Success might even yet be achieved without death. He desired it, he hoped for it, he asked it of God; he continued to hope and to ask even in Gethsemane. But whatever might be the future, that which would happen would be the Father's will. He should therefore be victorious; and even though he were to be overtaken by a most

atrocious and ignominious death, still in defeat he would be victorious. Even in death, even in martyrdom, victory would lie concealed. He did not know how, but God was his Father, and God could not be defeated ; his cause and that of his Father were the self-same cause.

All these new ideas arose in Jesus' mind, crowding on one another, succeeding one another, and in perfect accord. He was convinced that he was to abolish the Law of Moses and establish the reign of God. The thought presented itself to him that he might be the victim of its establishment and of the accomplishment of a work so different from that which the people were expecting. But must not the kingdom be established by violence, by disturbance ?¹ Then there would be nothing surprising in anything that he might have to suffer ; and if he were to die, so be it ! He would return accompanied by legions of angels, and then he would found the kingdom.

At the same time his ideal became that of universality. His rupture with the Pharisees completed this enlargement of his ideal. He declared that since John

¹ Matt. xx. 12 ; Luke xvi. 16.

the Baptist, the Law was no longer in existence.¹ The true import of his words “destroy not, fulfil,” appeared to him anew. He had already said that new stuff should not be sewed to the old, nor new wine put into old wine-skins ; here, certainly, was a new notion, a creative act. Every man of good will was a son of Abraham,² and the Law was made only for the sons of Abraham according to the flesh. All men were called to be sons of God; he was calling man, not the Jew ; he was preaching the religion, the rights, the salvation of humanity, and not those of the Jew. Mosaism had lived ; it had now only to disappear.

Thus the most deeply rooted of Jewish prejudices disappeared, and forever, from Jesus' thought. Certainly he had lost the Jewish faith.³ A magnificent prospect

¹ Luke xvi. 16; Matt. xi. 6-13, ix. 16-17; Luke v. 36 f.

² Luke xix. 9.

³ It must not be forgotten here that the apostles for the most part remained very closely attached to Judaism, and that they never became aware how far their Master had gone. They believed him to have remained more a Jew than was the case. In his trial Jesus was accused of sedition, and the Talmudic meaning of this word is very clear. Those were called seditious who overturned the Law of Moses.

opened out before his thought: all men were equal, all were brothers; Gentiles also, even Samaritans! — the kingdom would also be for them!

That which completed the enlightenment of Jesus on this subject was his journeyings in heathen lands. To see the “*Goïm*,” to visit their home, was a revelation to him. Up to this time he had seldom seen them, and had known little of them. In Galilee, only Tiberias was a Gentile city; and Jesus never went there, precisely because it was not the custom to visit Gentile cities. But at last he had gone to Tyre and Sidon; he had seen temples consecrated to idols and an organized worship; in these two cities he had found himself in the very midst of paganism, and it was there that he completed his detachment from the opinion which excluded Gentiles from the kingdom.

His interview with the Canaanitish woman¹ marks the end of his former ideas about Gentiles. When this woman asked

(*Jerus. Sanh.* 14, 16; *Babyl. Sanh.* 43 a and 67 a.) In these passages the Talmuds speak of Jesus, and describe the form of procedure against him. He had been deemed seditious.

¹ Matt. xv. 21-28; Mark vii. 24-30.

him to heal her daughter, he said, "I am not sent save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It was just what he had already said to his apostles, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans;" and a moment later, when the Canaanitish woman insisted, he declared, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." The children were the Jews, and they alone; the dogs were the Gentiles. And behold it was at that very moment that he was conquered by the faith of the sorrowful woman who was imploring him to save her child. Light rose upon him; he declared that he had not found such faith even among his own people. From that day he entered upon a universal work; he did this in the most absolute sense, and this was a new notion, a creative act.

He had some other contact with Gentiles. A few weeks later at Cæsarea Philippi, during another of those excursions commanded by prudence which carried him beyond the reach of Antipas and the Herodians, he saw a marble temple erected to Augustus by Herod the

Great, and statues of the god Pan with his nymphs.

But before these statues the Jew was very much like the Mussulman to-day in polytheistic countries; he is closed to impressions, it seems as if he were blind. So the rigorous monotheism of the son of Israel took from him all capacity of understanding paganism.

It is indeed remarkable that Jesus never spoke of idolatry or of paganism in order to directly condemn either, as did the Jews of his time who declaimed against idolaters.¹

What especially impressed him was the political subjection of the Gentiles. The Jew's sole master was God. Must he serve other masters on earth? Jesus had heard this great question agitated all around him ever since his childhood, and he knew that Judas the Gaulonite and others had taken it seriously and had revolted. He was firmly of the opinion that in one sense God alone is master, and he condemned the deceitful servility of the Gentiles, which betrayed itself by the

¹ See "Wisdom," xiii. ff. In this book we have a model of pedantic and unintelligent condemnation.

titles that they gave their sovereigns;¹ nevertheless he saw in them brothers, also called to the kingdom, and to whom he from this time said the kingdom was to be transferred.²

Upon universal brotherhood he founded his absolute non-sectarianism. The conception of a universal worship became his, and henceforth no barrier could separate him from the nations.³ We have already alluded to the parables of this period, — the vineyard leased to others,⁴ the prodigal son returning home, the servants going out into the highways to seek for the lost, and none of the first invited guests who made excuse permitted to taste of the prepared supper. The kingdom, which was still to come, would be given up to the Gentiles. “Many should come from the east and the west,” and should enter the Messianic banquet-hall. The Jews would be shut out. Jesus did not say merely “the Gentiles too,” he did not even

¹ Mark x. 42; Luke xxii. 25.

² Matt. xxi. 43.

³ Matt. viii. 5 f., xv. 22 f.; Mark vii. 25 f.; Luke iv. 25 f.

⁴ Matt. xxi. 41; Mark xii. 9; Luke xx. 16.

say "the Gentiles first;" he went so far as to say "the Gentiles only."

Let us not suppose that such a question was entirely new. Though the travels of Jesus in pagan countries definitely completed his emancipation from sectarianism, though his interview with the Canaanitish woman, in which he used the most absolutely particularist terms, completed the opening of his eyes, he had for a long time, since the beginning of his ministry, been logically drawn toward catholicity. The very fact that he preached a change of heart, conversion to God, and nothing else, threw down the barriers which separated him from the nations. If an interior change sufficed, if to belong to the Jewish race was not necessary, why were not Gentiles called too? Jews had first been called because they were the chosen people; and when he had told the disciples to go and preach only to the children of Israel, it was because they had the rights of the oldest son; but he had long since said the field is the world,¹ clearly showing that he made no difference between peoples.²

¹ Matt. xiii. 38.

² Matt. viii. 11, 12; xxv. 31-34.

He was also prepared for catholicity by his conviction that God is the God of humanity, and not the special God of Israel alone. This God, who is not a fatal being, killing, damning, and saving at his own pleasure,—this God, who is the Father, is universal. Though Jesus understood the Maccabees and Judas the Gaulonite, he took a stand high above them. Judas the Gaulonite had said, God alone is Master; one must die rather than call any one Master on earth. The kings of earth, the powerful, the great, are masters, and must be respected; but each one has his Father in heaven, and may feel himself to be his child on the earth; men are all brothers, Gentiles also are sons of the Father who is in heaven.

Furthermore, if with Jesus there is much that is new, there is still nothing unexpected, nothing which had not been prepared for long before; not only did he draw the universality of the second part of his ministry from the depths of his own consciousness,—and we may find its origin in his first words,—it still came from the Old Testament. All the roots of this progress were in the past; from the time of

the prophets the conversion of the Gentiles was one of the works of the Messiah and one of the signs of his coming.¹ Only Jesus had placed the conversion of the Gentiles in the future, and all his life he had maintained that the Jews alone were to be evangelized by the apostles.²

His ideas about the Samaritans had always been very liberal; on this subject he had early entirely parted company with his people. The hatred of Jews for Samaritans surpassed that which they manifested to the Gentiles; they abhorred them. Jesus, on the contrary, had always been well disposed toward them. At the present time there was in his mind a very distinct impulse toward reaction. The parable of the Good Samaritan is very clear.

According to this parable the neighbor is any man, even a Samaritan. So Jesus had thought as he was going up to Jerusalem or as he was returning by way of Samaria.

¹ Isa. ii. 2 ff., lx.; Amos ix. 11 ff.; Jer. iii. 17; Mal. i. 1; Tobias xiii. 13 f.; *Syb. Orac.* iii. 715, etc.; cf. Matt. xxiv. 14; Acts xv. 15 ff.

² Matt. vii. 6; x. 5, 6; xv. 24.

One day, especially, when he stopped for a few minutes to rest himself beside Jacob's Well, he had had an interview with a woman of the country which made a mark upon his life. To speak to her was already to give a proof of his liberality; but the expressions of which he made use clearly showed that the tendency to catholicity, which grew more marked in the middle of his ministry, and when he came in contact with Gentiles, had already been long latent in his soul.

For many years Jesus had thus been embracing in thought the whole world, of which God was the Father, and believing that there was only one worship, belonging neither to time nor to country,—the worship of God the Spirit, who wills that they who worship him should worship him in spirit and in truth.¹

Such were the thoughts which were pressing upon the heart of Jesus during the few months of the summer of 29.

He wandered here and there, desiring to escape from his enemies, and at the same time seeking to know the Father's will and awaiting his hour. Resolved to set out

¹ John iv. 23, 24.

for Judea, to go even to Jerusalem and manifest himself to the world, he yet remained a few weeks longer in the northern countries, for he had important communications to make to his apostles. From this time he had nothing to conceal from them, and he knew that his Messiahship was no longer a mystery to them.

One day, therefore, he led them on the road to Cæsarea of Philip, a brother of Antipas, from whom he knew he had nothing to fear.

After having followed for a while the banks of the Jordan and crossed great marshes, the Master and his disciples quitted the stream and climbed the gentle acclivities of the mountains which close the valley of the upper Jordan at the east. Little by little they thus quitted the land of Israel, and entered the territory of the Gentiles. There Jesus was unknown, he felt himself in a foreign land; and alone with the Twelve, his intimacy with them became more close. He drew forth Peter's confession "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,"¹ and immediately after revealed to them the secret which was

¹ Matt. xvi. 16.

weighing on his soul,—he must die soon and by a violent death. He was to go up to Jerusalem, and there he would be condemned to death. He foresaw it, announced it, maintained it; then at other moments he hoped that it might not be thus, that his people would recognize him. Ah! if Jerusalem welcomed him, he would found the kingdom and would not be put to death!

Nevertheless, it was time to set out.

This resolution to depart for Judea was one of the grandest which Jesus took. Doubtless no other issue was open to him; but he had willed it thus, and what he now decided was to make of his death, if death was inevitable, the greatest act of his mission.

He was more sure than ever of the coming of the kingdom. He always announced it as near, and declared that some of those who were gathered round him would not die until they had seen him coming with his kingdom or in his kingdom.¹ At a later time he declared to Peter—so certain was he of the near appearance of the king-

¹ Matt. xvi. 28, x. 23, xxiv. 34; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 29.

dom — that he should have a public and brilliant recompense in this world and still another in the age to come.¹ The kingdom was then, in the mind of Jesus, both always future and always near. Foreknowledge of his death changed nothing of this; and still later, when he spoke of the cup which he was to drink and the baptism of blood which he was to receive, that is, when he predicted the near approach of a violent death, he still could tell the sons of Zebedee that they might be seated on his right hand, have the two highest places, when he should come in his glory surrounded with angels, and that the Twelve should sit upon twelve thrones.² It was not he who was to allot them places, it was his Father; but he denied neither the approaching triumph, nor the reality of the assizes of the apostles and of the approaching judgment, and this in spite of his death, at the very hour in which he announced it as certain. The latter, in fact, would be only an event, an accident in some sort, an act willed by the Father, no doubt, and having

¹ Mark x. 28-31; Luke xviii. 28-30; Matt. xix. 27-29.

² Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30.

capital importance, but a fact which took away nothing whatever from his Messianic hope and his prediction of the coming of the kingdom.¹

¹ Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30.

CHAPTER XII

FINAL DEPARTURE FOR JERUSALEM

EVER since Jesus had found himself obliged to give up his work in Galilee, to part from those villages above all others beloved, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, Magdala,—he had wandered here and there. We have seen him drawing near to Gentile countries, keeping at his command means of easy escape, if Herod should press him too closely, and at times even crossing the frontier and coming in contact with Gentiles, that “world” which up to this time he had seen only from afar.

Everywhere in these journeyings he carried with him the thought “I am going to my death; the Messiah may and even must suffer and die;” and this notion, which was absolutely anti-Jewish and revolting to a Jew, completed his detachment from the religion of his fathers. He sought to instil it into the minds of his apostles, he never tired of talking with them of the necessity

of his death, he returned continually to the subject; but he never succeeded in convincing them, for a Jew could not comprehend such a thought as the Messiah put to death.

He had learned many things during these journeys on which he had seen and spoken with Gentiles. It is certain that from the time of his interview with the Canaanitish woman he had rejected all Jewish particularism. We have seen this woman showing him how just and not unjust it is to give to the dogs the bread which the children refuse; and he was already preparing and was soon to relate surprising parables of universal breadth¹ which give us his final doctrine on this point,— the parable of the Excuses, that of the Husbandmen, in which he said that the children of the kingdom, that is, its natural inheritors, should be cast out. Ah! it was because there were moments when he despaired of the conversion of the Jews, even while still hoping for it. It was with regard to this, as with regard to his death; he affirmed its unavoidable necessity, and yet he had a secret hope that it might be avoided.

¹ Matt. viii. 12; xxi. 33-44.

As we have already said, ever since Peter's confession Jesus had resolved to make his death by violence the greatest act of his mission. Indeed, if it was inevitable, it was because it was according to the will of God. Then it must be that it was to serve his work. This reasoning on the part of Jesus was in the highest degree simple and inevitable; there was not, nor could there be, room in his soul for doubt. God was in his life and in his work; it was the Messianic work; and if he was to die a violent death, it was because it was God's will that the Messiah should thus die. The reading of certain passages of the Prophets¹ could not but fortify this thought. He knew that it was the lot of God's ambassadors to be persecuted,² that martyrdom is the law of the conflict between holiness and the world; and in this sense he found his death in the Old Testament, and especially in Isaiah.

The celebrated fifty-third chapter certainly had not taught him in his youth that the Messiah was to die; but it is very probable that when he once understood the

¹ Isa. liii., for example.

² Matt. v. 12; xxi. 35; xxiii. 37.

necessity of his martyrdom, he would find the confirmation of the necessity in this chapter, and that thenceforth he applied it to the Messiah,—a thing which his contemporaries did not do, and which he himself had not done until this time.

This is not all. If a violent death was not to be avoided, if therefore it made a part of the plan of God and was intended to serve his Messianic work, it was necessary, as we have said, that it should be accomplished in Jerusalem. If he remained in Galilee, Antipas would bring about his destruction, and his death would be hardly noticed. He remembered what had happened to John the Baptist. Herod would have him also arrested, thrown into a dungeon, and then secretly done away with, ordering that he should be beheaded without witnesses; and then nothing of him would remain. Jesus had seen the consequences of John's death; after the first impression of horror at the murder, no more had been said.

Herod, who by his spies kept watch of Jesus, might even have him secretly assassinated, and the consequences of such a crime would be even worse: no one would

know what had become of him. Something else must be done; since he was the Messiah, he must die in Jerusalem. He must not perish less gloriously than the prophets, and he would not draw back from that. It would indeed be easy to escape it all, to go out into Perea, the territory of Herod Philip—if he wished! But the inward voice, the voice of the Father, said to him, “No prophet dies out of Jerusalem.” And, besides, Jerusalem attracted him; he would once more try to win over the rebellious city,¹ as he had already so often tried. Who could tell? Perhaps he would succeed in the end! And then he would be welcomed, and his death would not be necessary to his work!

Before all things, let the Father’s will be done; for the moment his death seemed to him very necessary, quite inevitable. And he was constantly speaking of it. “They will kill the Son of man,” he would say to his disciples. The thought pursued him,—he often repeated the same words,—“They will kill the Son of man; they will kill him.”²

¹ Luke xiii. 33.

² ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν. Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 22, 23; Mark ix. 31, x. 34; Luke xviii. 33; etc., etc.

If he should be arrested in Jerusalem and regularly condemned, how would he die? No doubt by stoning: that was most probable; it was thus that his people put to death false prophets and heretics. He could not yet even dream that by a dexterous manœuvre they might lay off upon Pilate all the odium of his execution; that the Jews would not have the courage to sentence him, and would find means, by false swearing, to cause Jesus to be condemned by the Procurator. It was probably at the last moment that the Sadducees had the cowardice to ask Pilate to pronounce sentence, or, if they had decided in advance to do this, they naturally kept to themselves the shameful secret.¹

¹ I have shown, in *Palestine au temps de Jésus Christ* (5th edition, page 103 f.), that the words "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" were merely a bit of flattery for Pilate. The Jews, if they had chosen, might have executed their own sentence of death, and in that case Jesus would have been stoned. In predicting his own death Jesus made use of the word "crucified" only twice (Matt. xx. 19; xxvi. 2). Everywhere else he simply said that he would be put to death. Mark and Luke knew no other expression, and the word "crucified" would very naturally have been substituted (*post eventum*) for the words "put to death" by the author of the first Gospel. If it be

And now this grave question presents itself: What significance did Jesus give to his violent death?— for he certainly held that it had significance. Considering it as willed by God, it was necessarily, as we have said, of capital importance in his work.

Let us try to reply to this question; and first let us recall to mind what work Jesus had to do. He had to prepare, by a change in men's hearts, for the coming of the kingdom of God. In this work, which had been the very soul of his ministry in Galilee, he

absolutely required that the words be deemed authentic, it may be observed that these two predictions belong to the very last days, and at that moment Jesus may very well have had a presentiment that the last ignominy of being delivered "to the wicked," as he called them, that is, the Gentiles, was reserved for him, and that in that case he should die on the cross. If he already knew that he was to die during the Feast, he might foresee that the Jews would not dare not to refer the matter to Pilate, who always came to Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. As to the expression, "If any one will be my disciple, let him take up his cross" (Luke ix. 23), it represents supreme abnegation, perfect renunciation, but does not necessarily argue that Jesus knew that he was to be crucified. Death by the cross was so frequent that Jesus might speak of bearing the cross without necessarily foreseeing his own crucifixion.

had not succeeded. Notwithstanding his temporary success, he had not obtained by his teaching that conversion, that new birth, that change of hearts and lives, which he sought. Quite the contrary, he had been rejected.

None the less did he continue to declare that the conditions of entrance into the kingdom were such as he had always pointed out. His failure, though it might lead even to his condemnation to death, had changed nothing of all that.

In the beginning, when he had said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest," that is to say, "I will prepare you to enter the kingdom, I will give you eternal life, I will save you," he naturally said nothing about his violent death, because he as yet knew nothing about it. All his sayings up to this time had thus implied that each one would find *in him* the satisfaction of his religious needs, rest, peace, life, without any reference to his death, and solely because he was the Messiah preparing for the coming of the kingdom.

Now that he understood that death was probably inevitable and necessary, he changed nothing in his teachings as

to the conditions of entrance into the kingdom. His language remained the same. The announcement of his death had nothing to do with his preaching of the kingdom. Jesus continued to his last day to specify the same conditions of entrance into the kingdom of God,—repentance, conversion, the fulfilling of God's will. Especially were works of charity a means of entrance. One day, describing the last Judgment, he declared — and this at the very close of his life — that they who should enter eternal life would be those who had visited the sick, the prisoner, and the poor, who had given food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty; that is, such as had done good deeds.¹ These would have their “reward” in heaven. He said to a rich young man, at the very time of his last journey to Jerusalem, that to obtain eternal life he must “keep the commandments.”² Still a little later he gave the same answer to a Scribe who asked him the same question.³ In both cases he insists upon salva-

¹ Matt. xxv. 31-46. See chapter iii. page 39 f., where we have already developed this thought.

² Mark x. 17 f.

³ Luke x. 25 f.

tion by acts,—selling his goods for one, showing mercy to a Samaritan for the other,—in other words, to show by their works that they had a new heart. He never said that his death would open the doors of the kingdom or that it was to be a means of having them opened.

What, then, is the place of his death in his work? We must recognize that, so to speak, Jesus never answered this question; for though he often predicted his death,—though the words “The Son of man shall be rejected, scoffed at, put to death,” were continually upon his lips, betraying the heavy foreboding, the inward anguish, of his soul,—he seldom explained himself as to the meaning which he gave these words.

Still, let us try to picture to ourselves what was passing in his mind when he thought thus of his approaching disappearance. Let us abstract ourselves from our modern ideas and all our religious education, in which we have been taught that Jesus died upon the cross for us,—a thing indeed perfectly true, but needing to be explained and understood. Let us put ourselves in the first century, a year

before the death of Jesus, at the time when death begins to appear to him more and more probable. He no longer greatly hopes that his people will be converted by hearing his words. He still hopes for it at times ; a change of feeling may take place. And yet it is certain that his work of reformation, that enterprise which with such confidence he had undertaken, has failed. His words and miracles do not suffice. And so, what more can he do ? Of two things, one, — either give up his mission or be ready for anything, even for death. There is no middle path ; he must choose between these.

We may say with assurance that Jesus never so much as put to himself this question, because in his view his mission was to do his Father's will, and that will was made manifest to him by the events of his life. The path of obedience which had been his from the earliest day would remain his without the slightest hesitation or wavering.

Now, upon this path which he was following, he had made a marvellous progress ; and he had made it all at once, by a single step, — a giant stride forward.

He had entered upon a new stage ; realities hitherto unknown uprose before him, realities more stern than those which had confronted him in the days of the desert temptation. At that time he had created a Messianic ideal which was to be detached from Jewish superstition and fanaticism. He had emerged from the desert the spiritual and moral Messiah ; now, from the trials through which he had passed, loss of popularity, openly manifested hatred of the Pharisees, of Herod, of the people themselves, he came forth the Messiah who must suffer, sacrifice himself, go forward even to martyrdom and death. His death should be the crown and the capital work of his life. For the first time he understood this and understood it perfectly. But what a change ! What an overthrow of all that he had believed, lived, understood, of all that up to this time had been the Father's will !

It is exceedingly remarkable that the faith of Jesus in himself and his work remained absolutely true to itself. He added to it a new element, the acceptance of a violent and nearly approaching death,

that is, the entire renunciation of all that up to this time had been the strength and the joy of his life ; for he had expected — he the Messiah — that during his lifetime, in a few years, the kingdom of God would be manifested. His faith in his work had been faith in the efficacy of his words and his cures. Now that he no longer believed in the efficacy of his words, he believed in that of his death. This faith in his death (if the expression may be permitted) had become faith in his work. No doubt, as we have just said, he hoped against all hope ; a change in the popular disposition remained possible to the very last minute,¹ but he hardly counted upon it any longer. He said, “I must be put to death,” — must, because the Father so wills. The whole change in his thought is to be explained by submission to the Father’s will ; and thus that which would naturally discourage him, make him lose faith in himself, on the contrary strengthened him. The religious authorities were

¹ In our first volume we showed that the cry in Gethsemane, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” has no meaning if it does not signify, ‘If it be possible, let my Messianic work be otherwise accomplished.’

threatening him, the official world which had seemed to be the true representative of the thought of God, and which he had hoped to convert, would do everything to compass his destruction, and, instead of saying to himself, "I was mistaken," he saw in their hatred the fulfilment of the will of God. It was the Father's will that he should be conquered; it was in defeat that his victory was to consist. Never had Jesus been more sure of himself than in this crisis, which bade fair to overthrow all his hopes, and which in fact did overthrow them, but without overthrowing him.

There he was, abandoned by the people, rejected by every one, alone, misunderstood, a wanderer, with a violent death looming up before him, probable and near at hand. Must he not have said, under such circumstances, that the Messianic time was still far off, placing its realization in a far distant future? Quite the contrary: with superhuman faith and courage he affirmed that all things had been committed to him by the Father.¹ Far from being discouraged after so many

¹ Matt. xi. 27.

sterile efforts, he set down the popular desertion to the account of the sufferings willed by the Father for the salvation of his nation and the world.

This unalterable confidence of Jesus in his work, his Father, and himself is certainly supernatural. Death appeared before him, the abrupt and tragic end, taking him in the opening of his work, overtaking and overpowering him in full activity; and he had not a shadow of hesitation, because God was with and in him. There is enormous strength, as a proof of the divine nature of Jesus, in this assurance which no external event could disturb. What! he was to die, to be taken away, and still remain the Messiah! He would still be the Judge of the world, the founder of the kingdom of God! He would remain all that he had said, take back not a single particular; would always be thus sure of himself, of God, and of the truth!

But did he give any particular significance to his death? Let us see how his future teachings answer to this question. He considered his death as decreed by the Father,—a decision of the Father very distinct from his own, with regard to him,

Jesus,—and he would accept it, not without conflict and anguish, but always declaring that he would do what God willed.

Allusions to his death, though unexplained, are constant from the moment at which we have now arrived. He must “take account of his forces,” “lose his life to save it,” die like a corn of wheat in order to bear fruit,¹ “be servant of all in order to be great.”² We have a right to suppose that Jesus was here speaking from experience and applying these words to himself. It was he who was taking account of his army before undertaking the great battle, taking account of his possessions before building the tower on which so much must be spent; it was he who was losing his life in order to save it and his work; it was he who could die like the grain of wheat in order to bear fruit, he who would be humble and servant of all and thus would be truly great. He had sown, the sowing had been hard and painful, and now the furrow which he had traced must be watered with his blood; but his faith in the final triumph remained the same. He did not know the day of the

¹ John xii. 24.

² Matt. xx. 20-28.

triumph, — God alone knew that date,¹ — but he was expecting it; he believed in its speedy coming; and in our third volume we shall show that the apocalyptic visions of his last days say nothing that Jesus might not have said at the opening of his ministry, when he promised the kingdom to the lowly, the thirsting, the meek, and the afflicted.

Jesus, then, saw in his death an act of devotion necessary to the coming of the kingdom. Whether he died by crucifixion or stoning, his blood would be none the less poured out, as he himself said at a later time, repeating an expression by which his people spoke of death. To pour out the blood of any one was to kill him, for they said, “The blood is the life.”

Jesus accepted the sacrifice of life which the Father asked: he offered himself, he gave his life for the sheep, as a good shepherd should do.² The wolf was Satan, the Devil, who exercised an immense power and held men in bondage. The world belonged to him; he was its prince. The Son of man had come to minister, to offer himself up, to give his very life as a ran-

¹ Mark xiii. 32.

² John x. 11.

som to the Prince of Darkness, that he might snatch men from this slavery. He was the good shepherd, and he gave his life as a ransom to the wolf, the ravishing foe that was carrying away the sheep.¹

¹ It seems impossible to interpret otherwise the passage (Mark x. 45 and Matt. xx. 28), "The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." It must first be asked if Jesus made use of a word signifying precisely what we understand by ransom, that is to say, the sum paid to free a prisoner. This is by no means certain. We may remark, first of all, that in the Greek *λύτρον δοῦναι ἀντί* is analogous to *ἀπολυτρώσαι*, that is, set free, deliver, with no stipulation as to the mode of deliverance. But this observation is not enough, for Jesus spoke in Aramaic, and it is certain that in order perfectly to understand the word "ransom" we need to know what was the Aramaean word he used. In general, a sound exegesis of the important words of Jesus can only be made by translating them back into Aramaean, and seeking to recover the original phrase as it issued from his lips, before being translated by his disciples into Greek. As to the passage now occupying us, the question is difficult to solve. Jesus had several words at his disposal. If we were sure that *λύτρον* represented in the thought of Jesus the *kopher* of the sacerdotal legislation (applied to the sacrifice), we might give another interpretation than "ransom," for the Hebrew sacrifice was never a ransom. But (1) *λύτρον* represents in the LXX. many other words besides *kopher*, for example, the derivatives of a verb which signifies "redeem" (Lev. xix. 20; Exod. xxi. 30), or it serves to

Another passage must be noted. On the eve of his death, when instituting the

translate the word "price" (Isa. xlvi. 13). (2) *Kopher* in the older parts of the Old Testament designates the money fine paid by the murderer to the family of his victim. In this sense it is truly a ransom, a buying back (Exod. xxi. 30; cf. Num. xxxv. 31, 32). (3) Jesus spoke Aramaic, and this language has other words besides that corresponding to *kopher* which serve to render the Greek *λύτρον*; for example, in the passage which occupies us (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45), the Peschito makes use of a word whose root signifies "save" and also "ransom." Let us admit, in spite of these uncertainties, that Jesus made use of a word clearly signifying "ransom." In this case we affirm that there can be no question in his thought of a ransom to pay to God. Jesus never represented God as a creditor demanding to be paid, still less as a master exacting a ransom before delivering up his slaves or his prisoners. Jesus always taught that God is a Father forgiving his children without requiring anything else from them than their own forgiveness of their brothers. He considered sin as a debt contracted toward God; he calls it a debt in so many words, and he always declared that God wholly forgives us this debt. He asks of us only one thing, that we ourselves shall pardon those who have sinned against us. Let the reader look up the following passages, Matt. vi. 12, 14, xviii. 35, Luke xi. 4, Mark xi. 25, Luke vi. 37, etc., etc., and especially read the parable of the merciless servant (Matt. xviii. 24 ff.), and he will see that there is perhaps no teaching which Jesus gave more constantly, more clearly, and upon which he more insisted, than this. The ransom of which he speaks in a single passage cannot therefore be paid to God. He for-

Lord's Supper, Jesus said that his blood, which was about to be shed, was "the blood of the new covenant, shed for many, for the remission of sins."¹ Speaking thus, he alluded to a passage in the Law.² Moses, after having given the Law to the people, sprinkled them with blood, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has made with you." Jesus then solemnly affirmed to his apostles that he was about to pour out his blood to cement a new covenant, a covenant which would replace

gives the whole debt; he extends mercy, he exacts no ransom. It would be impossible, indeed, to falsify a whole teaching with a single passage. Whatever may be the meaning of the word "ransom" in the verse which occupies us, it cannot weaken the very clear declarations as to the freedom of the Father's forgiveness with which the teaching of Jesus is filled. It is with this passage as with the saying to the Pharisees when Jesus appears to announce the kingdom of God as present; it cannot alter the fact that everywhere else, at the end as well as at the beginning of his ministry, Jesus announces it simply as to come. It is the same again with his reply to the messengers of John the Baptist, when he seems to accord to his miracles an apologetic value, when we know distinctly by his whole attitude that he gave them none in the least.

¹ Matt. xxvi. 28; Mark xiv. 24; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 25. We shall study this passage in detail in our third volume.

² Exod. xxiv.

that of Sinai. In this he gives no theological explanation of his death, but he does affirm its importance.

Jesus, however, never considered his death as a sacrifice in the Levitical sense. He had found his sufferings predicted by the prophets, but he never said that his death was prefigured by the sacrifice of the Law, or in general by the Temple sacrifices.

We have already had occasion to remark that we never saw Jesus offering sacrifices in the Temple, except that of the Passover out of respect to a national custom, and at a patriotic festival which he much loved. He commended the Scribe who said that to love God is more than all whole burnt-offerings. We have several times cited the word of God in Hosea, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice ;" for Jesus often repeated it, entirely making his own this idea, which was much disseminated in his time and which came in a straight line from the first chapter of Isaiah, that God asks of us, above all things, the gift of ourselves, and that the rites of the Temple and the lamb offered upon the altar are not essential.

When his resolution to go up to Jerusalem was taken, Jesus made haste to put it into execution. Many of his utterances of that time show a holy impatience to be done with it all as soon as possible. Did he hope thus to bring nearer the moment of the coming of the kingdom? Did he expect something new? It is certainly the case that, comparing his death to a baptism of blood, he declared himself in haste to receive it.¹ It was at Jerusalem that he must receive it; let him hasten thither as fast as possible. With "his face steadfastly set," as St. Luke says, he set out for the Holy City.² He quitted the North of Galilee, passing by way of Capernaum, returning for a few days to his own home,—that home where he was leaving so many memories,—seeing again his mother and brothers, who had left Nazareth and established themselves in Capernaum. They urged him to perform some Messianic act. Let him hesitate no longer; let him go to Jerusalem, do some startling thing. Jesus refused, and the chasm that separated him from his own grew yet deeper. Some startling thing! "A sign from heaven!"

¹ Luke xii. 50.

² Luke ix. 51.

as the Pharisees had often said to him ; then not one of his brothers nor even his mother understood him. No doubt he was to do a startling thing, but a very different one from what they thought !

To his mind, it was essential to go to Judea, and because of Herod he considered it important that no one should suspect his presence in Galilee. He therefore left Capernaum incognito, never again to see this village. Without being observed, he went down the Jordan valley, taking once more that road so often traversed, which follows the eastern frontier of Samaria. He had passed along it for the first time at the age of twelve years, and how often in the interval ! But this time he did not immediately follow the road to its end ; he would not yet give himself up to his enemies. He wanted a few days of liberty, and so he crossed the river. On the other shore he would be at rest : it was Perea ; no one would disturb him.

But this stay was short, and toward the middle of autumn in the year 29 (we may indicate this date without too much temerity) he recrossed the Jordan, arrived at Jericho, and once more began openly his

public life, without the least allusion to its probable issue. He appeared at Jerusalem in the early days of October, at the Feast of Tabernacles. There we shall find him again in our last volume.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NAMES ASSUMED BY JESUS

THAT we may penetrate yet more deeply into the mind of Jesus, we have now to study the names which he gave himself or permitted others to give him, seeking to know in what sense he took them. Faithful to our method, we shall confine ourselves to interrogating and ascertaining the facts.

In our first volume we showed that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah from the time of his baptism. To follow the development of his thought about himself from that day forward, we must rest upon this historic basis: he believed himself to be the Messiah. This is the starting-point. He was born at the very time when men were expecting the Messiah; and this wholly external historic fact certainly had its influence upon his first decision.

He had been arriving at it little by little, and at his baptism it became definitive.

At the temptation he had repelled the popular Jewish Messianism which was to accomplish a political revolution; it was by a wholly spiritual and moral course of action that he would prepare for the kingdom of God. Toward the end he took a further step: he was to be a suffering Messiah, persecuted and dying as a sacrifice. We must now ask what consequences are involved in this affirmation, “I am the Messiah.”

One point must first be ascertained: Did Jesus deceive himself? This question, which we put to ourselves in our first volume, here presents itself anew. Renan has said that Jesus, intoxicated by success, believed himself to be the Messiah. He was sane at the beginning of his ministry, he was no longer so at its close; and his history, as Renan relates it, notwithstanding the carefulness with which he treats it, is the history of the growing excitement of a man who began with good sense, clearness of vision, the moral health of a fine and noble genius, and who ended in a sickly exaltation next door to insanity. The word “madness” was not written by Renan, but the thought may be found expressed on

every page. Well, the facts are opposed to this explanation. We affirmed this in our first volume; here we must demonstrate it. The demonstration is so much the more necessary as the error in question, which is the capital, fundamental, one may almost say the only, error in Renan's Life of Jesus, has been widely spread abroad and received as truth. There is a general belief that Renan found the key to the great enigma, and with it explained Jesus Christ. Therefore Christianity is done away; no one thinks of it any more. Now, what Renan discovered is this: Jesus succeeded, and his success dazzled him, blinded him, turned his head, and he became the mysterious apocalyptic personage of the last days.

Well, we do not think it is possible, with history at hand, to talk of the visible success of the ministry of Jesus. He was misunderstood by the people, and always less and less understood by them. They felt for him the merest passing admiration. The authorities, the leaders, the theologians, for the most part held him in very small estimation; and, above all, however great may have been his popularity in the

early days, it is historically certain that it continually went on diminishing. When Jesus cried, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes,"¹ he recognized that these new truths were hidden from the doctors. They were hidden by the decision of a supreme and mysterious will.

And later, when the crisis came, he kept his faith in himself. If he had been at the mercy of success or failure, guided by an external fatality, he would have given up the attempt; he did just the contrary. In the hour of failure, precisely when the people were leaving him, he declared himself to be the Messiah, with an assurance, a decision, a certitude greater than ever. We have pointed out the strength of mind, the faith and courage with which in the midst of the crisis he affirmed his Messiahship. This was the moment, as we have shown, when he might have said, "I have deceived myself, I have lost all, the time of the Messiah has not yet come;" yet, on the contrary, it was at this moment that he

¹ Matt. xi. 25.

gave a more precise form to his work. It was an external event, the necessity of his violent death, which gave birth to the inward conviction, "I am continually more certain, I am more certain now than ever, that I am the Messiah;" and at the same time he affirmed that all things had been committed to him by the Father.¹

We have here, then, a solid historic basis for knowing the thought of Jesus about himself. He had a profound, invincible, all-powerful conviction of his special vocation. He was convinced that the future founder of the kingdom was already present in the world; and, let it be carefully observed, he showed not merely strength of mind, the courage of the unfortunate in adversity (for him there was no adversity in the prospect of death, since it was willed by the Father; death was good and essential to the Messianic work), he showed not only courage, but the certitude that he was the extraordinary personage expected by his people, yet at the same time very different from him, since he must die by a violent death. His consciousness, which may not be separated from his communion

¹ Matt. xi. 27.

with the Father, thus revealed to him what he was and what his work was to be.

While affirming that he was the Messiah, and accepting the utterance of Peter, “Thou art the Christ!” Jesus never gave himself this name, but called himself the Son of man.

He did so in the very opening of his ministry, and the appellation aids us much to understand his thought about himself. Jesus attached to it extreme importance; he constantly gave himself this name, he preferred it to any other, and he was alone in thus prizing it. His apostles never adopted it; never, with a single exception,¹ did one of his disciples give it to him; it is probable that they did not understand it. The name contains, indeed, an element of the enigmatical.

To catch its true meaning, let us remain in the field of facts. When Jesus took this name it had behind it a somewhat long past and a true history. Let us relate this history.

The prophets, Ezekiel for example, made use of it to designate themselves. It was a term of humility. By taking it the

¹ Acts vii. 56.

prophet meant to stipulate clearly that he was only a man, although charged with a divine revelation. Thus, in the time of the prophets, this name in no sense implied Messianic dignity; it was simply a proof that a man was the bearer of a higher revelation.

Daniel, who came afterward, gave an entirely different meaning to the epithet "Son of man." This prophet declared¹ that after the four empires represented by the four animals the Messianic kingdom would appear, represented by a *Son of man*. The Ancient of Days would confer upon a being like unto a son of man power to judge the world and govern it eternally.² This detail is of capital importance; this phrase of Daniel's impressed men's minds to such a point that in the time of Jesus the name Son of man had become a synonyme for Messiah, in his capacity of judge of the world and ruler over the new social state which was imminent. The proofs of what we here affirm are abundant;³ and Jesus knew so well the pas-

¹ Dan. vii. 13. ² *Ibid.* and viii. 15, x. 16.

³ Enoch xlvi. 1, 2, 3, xlviii. 2, 3, lxii. 9, 14, lxx. 1. Cf. Matt. x. 23, xiii. 41, xvi. 27, 28, xix. 28, xxiv. 27, 30,

sages of Enoch upon this subject, and the whole theology of his time, that when he stood before the Sanhedrin he called himself the Son of man in the very words of Daniel.

There is, then, no doubt concerning the signification which Jesus gave to this name. He accepted the change of meaning which Daniel gave it, as indeed did all the theologians of his time.

But the people did not. The new meaning of the phrase "Son of man" remained unknown to them. They continued to take it in the sense that Ezekiel had given it, which was the simplest sense. To them "Son of man" was what it was in all the Semitic languages, and especially in the Aramaic, a pure and simple synonyme of the word "man." In all these languages, in fact, the meaning of the word "Son" and of the expression "Son of" is extremely large.¹ Thus the Son of man was, in the

37, 39, 44, xxv. 31, xxvi. 64; Mark xiii. 26, xiv. 62; Luke xii. 40, xvii. 24, 26, 30, xxi. 27, 36, xxii. 69; Acts vii. 55, 56; John v. 27; Rev. i. 13, xiv. 14.

¹ "Son of the devil" is found, Matt. xiii. 38; Acts xiii. 10.

Son of this world, Luke xx. 34.

Son of light, Luke xvi. 8; John xii. 36.

minds of the people, not the Messiah, but a prophet, a revealer. We can comprehend, therefore, how it was that the apostles never grasped the Messianic meaning of this name. In taking it, Jesus, who knew the ignorance of the people, knew very well, while giving himself a Messianic title and designating himself as the Messiah, how to veil from the eyes of the ignorant the true signification of the word. Thus he could ask, “Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?”¹ The name could be taken in two senses ; and Jesus, who knew this perfectly well, followed his usual method, not to destroy, but to fulfil, — to take a familiar traditional name and transform it, making of it something new and original for almost everybody.

The Son of man was, then, in the thought of Jesus : 1. The Messiah ; for the Rabbis in their schools and the Apocalypses unknown to the people gave him that

Son of the resurrection, Luke xx. 36.

Son of the kingdom, Matt. viii. 12, xiii. 38.

Son of the bridegroom, Matt. ix. 15 ; Mark ii. 19 ; Luke v. 34.

Son of hell, Matt. xxiii. 15.

Son of peace, Luke xvi. 16.

¹ Matt. xvi. 13.

name. 2. A simple man charged with a divine revelation, a prophet. Jesus used it in both senses. He was the Son of man, the glorious and triumphant Messiah, in his eschatological predictions, and in his sermons to the people he was the Son of man, humble and poor, who had not where to lay his head. The name, then, answered to a process which Jesus loved, and which he set working in the parables, to awaken attention, and force serious consciences to put to themselves an interrogatory. The name at the same time revealed and concealed him. It did not say everything, and this was just what he wished at the beginning, — without openly proclaiming himself as the Messiah, to do the work of the Messiah, and leave it to men to divine who he was and recognize him.

The people gave him the name Son of David; but the apostles never did, and he himself never took it. Yet it was one of the names of the Messiah, according to ideas which had been current since the close of the Asmonean period. It was admitted by every one that the expected Avenger would descend from David and be born at Bethlehem. St. Paul, for

example, was convinced that Jesus had been of the seed of David according to the flesh.¹ To believe that Jesus was the Messiah was to believe that he was descended from David; one was not separated from the other, and the two terms "Messiah" and "Son of David" were synonymous.

Yet Jesus never took to himself the name of Son of David; he permitted it to be given him. There is a shade of difference there. He certainly accepted his Davidic descent, since he never either refused or consented to it, since he never denied or contested it; but he preferred not to take officially the name Son of David. It is probable that he wished by this means to thoroughly establish the fact that his coming reign would have nothing in common with that of a king like David, who would have armies and exercise a military power.

There were, indeed, many things which Jesus did not repel, although he did not adopt them, which he simply let alone. Thus he permitted his disciples to baptize with John's baptism at the time when he

¹ Rom. i. 3.

was detaching himself from John, and was himself no longer baptizing. In the same way there were in his time ideas and opinions which he had no reason for rejecting, for in themselves they were neither false nor erroneous. They included nothing to be condemned, and yet notwithstanding he did not preach them and did not cause his disciples to preach them.

Do, then, the names Messiah, Christ, Son of man, Son of David, tell us all that Jesus had thought about himself? Not at all: they are merely to serve as a basis; they are a point of departure, but there was a progress. Upon this basis Jesus built up a more complete notion of his person; he summed it up under another name, that of Son of God.¹

In taking the name of Son of man, Jesus gave himself a historic title, but did not fully define himself. He claimed this title solely to show that he was bringing the promised Messianic blessings, and to bring to mind his quality of judge; but besides this it instructed his apostles concerning his person. He often explained to them who he was; and in these secret

¹ Matt. xi. 27-30.

interviews, when he insisted less upon his title of Messiah than upon his relations with the Father, he took the name Son of God.

To understand as far as is possible to us what this name signifies, we may recall to mind that Jesus exercised a great ascendancy over his disciples. He had gained them by a superiority which made itself felt; it was a moral grandeur, a charm, if one wills, but the charm of a singularly elevated nature. It had sufficed for him to say to them, "Follow me," and they followed him. They admired him, loved him, were carried away by him, subjugated, full of enthusiasm. Jesus had taken care to preserve that first impression. He had developed that attachment; he had done more; he had had private conversations with his apostles on the subject of his person. He had sought to convince them of his perfect communion with his Father, and it was then that he gave himself the name Son of God. It was essential, in fact, that they should believe in his sayings as in the Word of God itself; and if they gave themselves to him, it was because they were convinced that he was the Revelation of God, that the destinies

of the kingdom had been confided to him,—in a word, because they believed in his person.

In one of the most authentic passages in the Gospels, a passage drawn from the primitive collections of the discourses of Jesus made by the apostle Matthew, we find these words: “All things have been committed to me by the Father, and no man knoweth the Son except the Father, and none knoweth the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”¹ In this we come upon what Jesus used to say to his apostles in their secret interviews. He had had experience of the blindness of the sages, the doctors, the wise men; he had just offered thanks to God for revealing divine things to children and to the humble; it was he, the Son, who made the Father known to the lowly of this world, and the Father had put him in charge of this work, which was the work of preparation for the coming of the kingdom. For this reason he had given everything over to him,—and no one but God can know truly the depth of the thought of Jesus,—and he added, “Come unto me, all ye

¹ Matt. xi. 25, 26.

who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹

The extraordinary gentleness of these words is equalled only by their incredible assurance. We cannot and ought not to go beyond them. We can think no differently of Jesus from what he has thought of himself, and what he thought we know only in part. Let us accept this ignorance. God has not permitted that we should know more of him, and very daring are the constructors of dogmatic theory who build upon a basis so insufficient. They must be reminded of this saying, “No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” Then, no one comprehends God except Jesus, and he who believes in him and finds God by him; and as to the Son himself, no one knows him but the Father. Thus, the nearer we live to Jesus Christ, the nearer we live to God. Let us not ask more, and,

¹ Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30.

in the name of this saying, let us not hesitate to call them too daring who formulate and make precise statements. It was the great error of the fourth century to have forgotten this passage.

Jesus was the Son of God, but he seems never to have conceived the idea that he might be an incarnation of God.¹ The Jews calumniated him when they insisted that he made himself equal to God,² and it is certain that these expressions applied to his death—the blood of God, the death of God—would have horrified him. He was less than his Father;³ the Father had not revealed all things to him.⁴ If he was Son of God in a special sense, he was that as all men are or may become his sons.⁵ We cannot go further without entering the domain of dogmatics, and we abide by the expression “divine sonship.” Already during the eighteen years of his preparation at

¹ Matt. xix. 17; Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.

² John v. 18 ff., x. 33 f. ³ John xiv. 28.

⁴ Mark xiii. 31.

⁵ Matt. v. 9, 45; Luke vi. 35, xx. 36; John i. 12, 13, x. 34, 35. Cf. Acts xvii. 28, 29; Rom. viii. 14, 19, 21, ix. 26; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Gal. iii. 26, and in the Old Testament, Deut. xiv. 1; Wisdom ii. 13, 18. All who are raised from the dead will be sons of God, Luke xx. 36.

Nazareth it was in his consciousness of being the Son of God that Jesus found the strength and joy of his heart, and because he felt himself to be the Son of God he was convinced that he was the bringer of a new covenant. It was because he felt himself to be the Son of God that in the days of the temptation he transformed the notion of the Messiah and that of the preparation for the Messianic kingdom; and upon this divine sonship, as we have shown, he built the idea of salvation.

He was the Son of God in a special sense, for he said *my* Father, *your* Father, but never *our* Father in common with his disciples. He separated himself from the rest of humanity; but this was only an appearance, for his purpose was to raise humanity up to himself, to create among men and within them that normal relation to God which sin had destroyed. To this end he preached the Father, he revealed the Father, he desired that humanity should know God as Father. He felt that he must awaken the sentiment of divine sonship; then the kingdom would come.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REQUIREMENTS OF JESUS

TO study the names which Jesus took is still not enough.

At the moment at which we have arrived, at the hour when he was going up to Jerusalem, where his approaching death loomed up before him, we must understand the words which he spoke about himself. These words are of so imperative a nature that any elucidation, any development, can only weaken their import.

They are such as were never before heard, and their character is absolute. Men must follow him, love him, serve him, believe in him, and give themselves to him, because he first gave himself, and because he brings to us not a new doctrine but a person, his own. Men must live only for him, love only him, prefer no other being to him.¹

¹ Matt. x. 37-39, xvi. 24, 25; Luke ix. 23-25, xiv. 26, 27; John xii. 26.

The replies which he gave to those who desired to follow him are equally distinct and uncompromising.¹ Where the question is of himself, what one owes to him, what his disciples are bound to do for his sake, he refuses all half-way measures and approximations. He asks for all; he will have all. Renunciation must be complete,² all that one has, without restriction. One must flee from all that binds him to earth; and his illustrations are frightfully strong, — one must cut off the hand, pluck out the eye, which cause him to fall into sin.³

One may take upon himself to renounce marriage, but this he does not absolutely ask.⁴ In every case he requires a total renunciation of property, of the family, and the rupture of all ties of blood.⁵ His disciples must make no provision for a journey, not a change of clothing, not even a wallet, they are to live upon alms.⁶ They must

¹ Matt. viii. 21, 22; Luke ix. 59-62.

² Luke xiv. 33.

³ Matt. xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43 ff.

⁴ Matt. xix. 10 ff.

⁵ Luke xviii. 29, 30; Matt. x. 37 ff.; Luke xiv. 26, 27.

⁶ Matt. x. 8 f.; Mark vi. 8 f.; Luke ix. 3 f., x. 1 f
Cf. *Midrash Jalkouth sur Deuter.* Sur. 824.

not prepare their defence before their judges; the Paraclete will inspire them and will be their guide through the world.¹ They will be hated, persecuted, "lambs in the midst of wolves," but let them fear nothing. They are "of more value than many sparrows."² He will confess before his Father those who have confessed him before men, and he will deny those who have denied him, when he returns in glory;³ and this will be soon, for he ended by declaring that they would not have finished making a tour of the cities of Israel when the Son of man should appear.

In fact, perfectly to comprehend the words in which Jesus demanded the renunciation of all worldly goods⁴ and even of the family, we must remember that at that time every one was persuaded that the end of the world was at hand. Men did not even ask a question as to the time, no one asked himself when it would come, for it

¹ Matt. x. 20; Luke xxi. 14 f.; Mark xiii. 11; John xiv. 16 f., xv. 26, xvi. 7-13.

² Matt. xx. 24-31; Luke xxii. 4-7, i. 17; John xv. 18 f., xvii. 14.

³ Matt. x. 32, 33; Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26, xii. 8, 9.

⁴ Luke xiv. 26 f.

was expected to make itself apparent at short notice. It was an admitted, recognized fact, beyond all argument. A Jew of that time would say, The end of all things is at hand, exactly as we affirm that the sun will rise to-morrow, and it could not enter the mind of any one that the world would last perhaps during long centuries.

In general, Jesus condemned the good things of this world only as they hinder the accomplishment of one's Christian duties. There were cases where he did not disapprove of them absolutely, but solely if they were the cause of one's falling into sin.¹ But there were also times when he said that earthly goods always do harm, that they are always a cause of falling or of sin.² These precepts can only be taken literally by those who believe that the world is about to perish. How otherwise can people literally put such teachings into practice, break all family ties, give all their goods to the poor, give up all that they possess? There have been found holy men who said that it should be done and who tried to do it. They were mistaken. And

¹ Mark ix. 43, and parallel passages.

² Luke xiv. 25 ff. is explicit.

yet would not the perfect man be he who should precisely conform his life to Christ's precepts, and meet all his requirements? Certainly; and therefore we see that an immense, a prodigious moral progress has been made by Christian humanity since Jesus Christ, and that the world owes it to his gospel, and particularly to these uncompromising words. It is these precepts, holding up the ideal before our eyes, which have brought about this progress. Jesus said, This is the goal; he made appeal to the power of the will; he showed that man has within him divine forces whose power is without limit.

Furthermore, when he gave these precepts he applied them to himself, and he had already made the sacrifice of his life. When he gave them, and when he thought of his death, he was looking to the beyond; he was prophesying of the future, and gazing with magnificent clearness of vision upon the frightful tempest which he was about to let loose. He was about to bring in the sword, three against two, two against three.¹

¹ Matt. x. 34-36; Luke xii. 51-53. Cf. Micah vii. 6. See also John xvi. 2; xv. 18-20.

Thus Jesus came little by little to the point where he could make the highest assertions concerning himself, his work, the future, the final triumph of righteousness and of his own person. His Father had given him power even to change the Sabbath.¹ Faith could do all things,² and nature would obey him who prayed and believed as it obeyed Jesus himself.

Yet he never claimed that he was the creator of the world or its present governor; his highest claims were entirely Messianic: he was one day to judge and renew the world. To preside at the final assizes, where all humanity would appear, this was his office.

But observe carefully all that this includes. We are here at the highest point. Jesus was convinced that all who believed in him would receive the entire satisfaction of their religious needs; and we must place here his words about himself in the fourth Gospel, although they have evidently undergone remodelling in taking on the Johannine form. John, the inspirer and fundamentally the true author of this book,

¹ Matt. xii. 8; Luke vi. 5.

² Matt. vii. 19 f.; Luke xvii. 6.

shows the Christ as progressively revealing his person. Is not this an authentic memory of the process which the Master followed with his disciples? John puts into his mouth words which perhaps Jesus did not always actually utter, but which he was convinced he might have uttered, and which simply expressed what he was. In this St. John made no mistake. The Christ of the fourth Gospel in no respects overpasses him whom the Synoptists had made us perceive. Jesus was indeed he who is "the way, the truth, and the life." "He who hath seen him hath seen the Father."¹

This, then, is what he thought of himself at the time when the opposition which had already been shown became most violent. Men were turning against him, and soon they would put him to death; his work would be interrupted, his life shattered, his projects brought to nothing. But out of the depths of his consciousness and the certainty of divine Sonship he drew a new conviction: "If I die by a violent death, my death will be the vital moment of my work, the crowning of the preparation for

¹ John xiv. 6, 9.

the coming of the kingdom ; out of it will come the salvation of my people and of mankind."

In this work, which is neither dogmatic nor metaphysical and in which we confine ourselves to ascertaining the facts, we find ourselves led on, it is evident, to the establishment of facts which are strange and utterly inexplicable if Jesus was not a being apart, above and beyond humanity as we know it. We speak of his requirements ; perhaps we would better say his requirement, — for he made only one, which includes all the others : he asked that men should believe *in* him.

It is sometimes said that Jesus asks men to believe like him, but does not ask them to believe in him. No ; precisely the contrary is true. The facts are these : Jesus never said, " Believe like me," but, " Believe in me ; " and he said it most especially at the period of his life at which we have arrived.

At the present time, among Christians, no one believes precisely *like* Jesus. Do we believe like him when he believed that a deaf-mute was possessed by a demon ? Jesus adopted many of the opinions of his

time, and these opinions are not always ours. He was not a theologian ; he had nothing to do with dogmatics or with criticism, for the very simple reason that these sciences did not exist at the time in which he lived.

More than this : in the synagogues and at school in Nazareth he never heard anything about religious doctrines as being verities to be believed. Jesus never put to himself such a question as "Is this doctrine true ?" and he himself never formulated dogmas of which he said, "These are verities to be admitted," nor did he ever put to himself a critical question concerning the religious affirmations of the synagogue ; nor did what is to-day called orthodoxy exist in his time.

By orthodoxy I mean opinion conformed to a teaching fixed by religious authority, as opposed to heresy, to the opinion which parts company with the official and accepted faith, and is in disaccord with it. In the time of Christ no one knew what it was to be or not to be orthodox, no one concerned himself with such a matter. Thus, upon the most important of questions, the person of the Messiah, every one had

his own notion. One said he would be a political personage ; another said he would be exclusively religious. Some preached that he would remain hidden, living humbly among men ; others, that he would suddenly descend from heaven in his glory. He will appear before this or that, said one ; no, he will appear after it, said another, etc. In this matter no one had the slightest notion of putting forth an opinion which should be final and obligatory ; and it was thus with respect of all the doctrines. No one dreamed of formulating them, and therefore we have not been able in the preceding chapters to set forth the teaching of Jesus as a doctrine to be believed ; and indeed Jesus would not have wished it.

Yet were there no heretics ? Assuredly : those who did not follow certain practices. A pious Jew *did* all that tradition ordained. No negation would put him among the number of heretics, but those were regarded with disfavor who did not accomplish certain acts, did not observe certain rites, to which every one was attached. A Sadducee might quietly deny the existence of angels, of spirits, and of the invisible

world ; if he offered the required sacrifices, if he recited the Shema, if he observed the Sabbath, he was a Jew without reproach, and it was certainly a much more grave matter to eat pork than to deny the resurrection of the dead. Acts were more important than ideas.

Never did any Pharisee take Jesus to task for his religious ideas,— for, once again, there were no heretical religious ideas,— and he was always permitted to preach precisely what he chose. But he was taken to task for breaking the Sabbath ; his violation of it was the great and standing grievance of his adversaries. A Jew passed for pious if he went every year to offer the Paschal lamb, just as the Catholic is pious who does not fail every year to “keep his Easter.”

Now, Jesus, without precisely rejecting these practices, declared that they were of value only by reason of the sentiment of the heart, the inward faith which accompanied them ; and as to his own religious ideas, he never said, “Admit them.”

In this chapter, in which we speak of what he required, we must also say what he did not require.

Let us recall to mind a few of the religious beliefs of Jesus: we shall see that, side by side with imperishable and eternal verities, they include outworn elements which were doomed to disappear.

His God was the God of his people; no doubt he had such an experience of the fatherhood of God, he felt it so profoundly and intimately and affirmed it with so much power, that one might say that he first gave it to the world; yet it is none the less certain that he did not create the idea, and that the Old Testament teaches the fatherhood of God.¹

The same is the case with his notions of sin and holiness. The Old Testament taught them on every page.

These two notions are thoroughly Hebraic. But it may be said that Jesus made them over, and, as we have shown in our first volume, the notion of sin is closely connected with his appearing. In his view, evil was getting the better of good. His generation was wholly bad.² He who departs from God is dead and

¹ See, for example, the whole of Psalm ciii. and especially verse 13 and the Psalms *passim*.

² Matt. vii. 11, xii. 39 f., xvi. 4; Luke ix. 41.

lost.¹ Sin is a debt contracted toward God,² and we cannot ourselves discharge it.³ The sinner is a debtor. The seat of evil is the heart.⁴ Jesus never speaks of original sin, and assumes nothing innate. He says that sin comes from the devil and his suggestions. The devil sows tares.⁵ Moreover, evil comes from ourselves, from our desires. The eye, the foot, the hand, may cause us to fall into sin.⁶

Jesus, like his contemporaries, believed in demons. The devil is very powerful, for this world is his kingdom ;⁷ nevertheless he will not prevail. The kingdom of God is coming. Temptations come from Satan, and to say to God, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,” signifies, “Preserve us from situations where the devil can get a hold upon us.” Sometimes Jesus rebuked demons because they recognized him.⁸ That is to

¹ Luke xv. 24, 32.

² Matt. vi. 12. See the Greek text.

³ Matt. xviii. 25 f. ; Luke vii. 41, 42.

⁴ Matt. xv. 17-20, xvi. 41 ; Mark xvii. 21 f.

⁵ Matt. xiii. 19, 25, 38 f. ; Luke xxii. 31; John viii. 44.

⁶ Matt. v. 30, xviii. 8 ; Mark xi. 43.

⁷ Matt. xii. 26.

⁸ Mark i. 25; Luke iv. 35, 41, etc.

say, that demons, being powers of the invisible world, knew everything, and among others immediately recognized the Messiah in the humble form which he had chosen. Jesus seems also to have said nothing original concerning angels. He always spoke of them in the plural. They were to be the servitors of the Son of man at the last judgment.¹ They would make the great separation of all men into two parts.² Children had guardian angels in heaven.³ Angels did not know all things.⁴ The devil had also his angels, which were demons.⁵ Men would be with the angels in heaven.⁶

Jesus, then, was a man of his time, and he shared the beliefs of his time concerning angels, demons, the authenticity of the Law. With regard to the date of the end of the world he may have believed, he certainly did believe, that which the Jews of his age believed; but he nowhere tells us that to be a Christian we must believe all that. To be his disciple, once

¹ Matt. xiii. 39, 41, 49.

² Matt. xvi. 27, xxiv. 31, xxv. 31; Mark viii. 38; Luke xii. 22.

³ Matt. xviii. 10.

⁴ Mark xiii. 32.

⁵ Matt. xxv. 41.

⁶ Mark xii. 25.

again we repeat, one must follow him, live his life, enter into communion with him,—a very different thing.

Let us also take notice that Jesus never gave commandments of his own which were to replace the ordinances of the Law. He confined himself to prescribing the commandments of the Old Testament.¹

That is to say, he no more gave us duties to learn than doctrines to believe. He simply taught that whosoever is penetrated with the spirit of the gospel will practise the gospel. To love God is the great means of changing the direction of one's life. Therefore the Lord's Prayer begins with the hallowing of the name of God; and to love God men must love Jesus, and believe in Jesus.

The confidence in himself which Jesus required rested upon the consciousness of his moral perfection,—a consciousness all the more remarkable that it appeared in a world which had but small moral development. Nothing shows a general moral progress among the Jews of the first century. In this regard Jesus was not con-

¹ Matt. v. 19, xv. 4, xix. 17 f., and parallel passages; Luke p. 25 f.; John xiv. 15, 21, xv. 12 f.,

nected with the past; he who was bound to it by so many ties of all kinds was not held to it by this tie. He was in no respect the last term of an evolution of the moral progress of his people; and it was because he was fully convinced of his moral superiority, of his perfect holiness, that he asked his own to follow him.

Jesus, then, brings to us no list of beliefs to confess and of dogmas to subscribe to; but he does tell us what we must *do* to become his disciples.

It is very remarkable that he is true to the Jewish spirit, in giving to his disciples, not ideas to accept, but acts to perform.

The error of those persons is then plain who believe that to decide what is Christian doctrine we must begin by making perfectly evident the thought of Jesus Christ. They fancy that Jesus brought to us doctrines to believe, which must have for us an exterior authority, a canon. Certain Protestants are disposed to say, "The sayings of Jesus Christ are our Bible, our infallible authority, in the plenary inspiration of which we believe. We carve out our Bible from within the Bible, and the teachings of Jesus Christ are for us

what the whole Bible was for the theopneusties of former times.”¹

Not at all; for Jesus asks of his own only to believe in him, to follow him, to love one another, to bear their cross after him, to put their trust in him; and it is a grave error to picture Jesus as giving us a doctrine independent of his person, and bringing us a complete and logical system. He never formulated abstract truths which must be accepted by an intellectual operation. He never demands beliefs, but confidence in himself; and by this confidence he creates a new life in the soul, a religious and moral life, communion with God.

We who repel the notion of exterior authority of the Bible, saying, “It is to Jesus Christ that we must go,”—are we replacing the authority of the Bible with that of Jesus Christ? No doubt. Only we must clearly understand what we mean by the words “the authority of Jesus Christ.” The only way of understanding them is by asking what Jesus himself wanted us to understand by his authority. He certainly meant by it nothing else than con-

¹ I admit the supposition that the sayings of Jesus are all authentic, which has first to be demonstrated.

fidence in him. The authority of others is made of the confidence with which they inspire us. It can be made of nothing else unless it is to be made of material force, which cannot here be in question.¹

¹ The religion of Jesus, Christianity, is, then, not a system of religious truths which we are invited to believe. Very many persons think that faith is nothing else than adhesion to a certain number of doctrines. This wholly intellectual conception is that of Catholicism, from which Protestant orthodoxy has not yet been able to free itself. In consequence, to believe in the teaching of the Church is to be a Christian, and in virtue of this wholly Catholic notion the orthodox Protestant Synods have not confined themselves to setting forth that which for them is Christian doctrine (that is, their duty), but have insisted that men shall give adhesion to the confession of faith which they have formulated. As if aware of the error which they are committing, they are now making these Symbols as short as possible, reducing them to a more or less scanty minimum. But, minimum or not, they commit an error. They confound faith with intellectual adhesion to ready-made truths, formulated by the Church or its representatives. Now, if there is one certitude which stands out with evidence from all that in this book we have heard Jesus say, it is that faith is an act of the moral life, that its object is the person of the Christ, and that by faith each one enters into personal contact with him. Each Christian who has faith appropriates the Christ to himself, and should remain faithful to him, however much his dogmatic conceptions may become modified. Hence it results that faith in Jesus Christ may live, develop, and

It will perhaps be said: Of little consequence indeed are the purely intellectual

triumph, whatever may be the believer's dogmatic notions. Men smile at faith independent of belief, because they do not know what it is. But it is not we who invented it, but Jesus himself who taught it; and this notion is all the more certainly historic because it is in accord with the Jewish society in the midst of which it arose. We have said that in this society the idea mattered little. Men believed this or that with the intellect, but they cared only for the rite performed.

No doubt Jesus transformed this way of looking at things; he cared nothing for the rite; for example, he broke the Sabbath, but he replaced the rite by his own person. He cared for only one thing, he insisted on only one thing, but he insisted on this with great rigor,—that men should attach themselves to him, live and die for him, unite themselves to him by a deep and living faith, by a moral act which binds their whole being to him. The rest matters little.

Thus we escape from the objection which has been made to our way of thinking. It has been said: "Faith independent of belief means nothing. Faith must have an object." No doubt, we reply; and its object is the person of Jesus Christ. Faith is not, then, a purely subjective sentiment, but it is independent of historical beliefs, for which study is necessary. What would the laborer, the peasant, the uncultured man do, if in order to have saving faith he must investigate facts, that is, pursue a course of study? A purely historic event, M. Lachelier well says, (a) cannot be an object of faith, precisely because it is historic, and by this quality an object of knowledge.

(a) See *ante*, page 94.

beliefs of Jesus. He was ignorant of scientific discoveries which we have made and are making every day; he knew nothing of modern astronomy, neither had he our theological knowledge; but he had an opinion about himself, and when he asks men to believe in him, does he mean by that, believe in what he thinks about himself?

No; for the two notions are different. A child who believes in his father, who has confidence in him, does not necessarily believe what his father thinks about himself. Most generally he does not know, and perhaps could not even understand, what he thinks. His father may consider himself a genius, and may be mistaken; the child has confidence simply because his father is good and strong, takes care of him, gives him his daily bread, watches over him. He knows of his father that of which he has had experience, and even about this he does not reason; he feels instinctively that his confidence in his father is well placed: that is all. He cannot know anything that lies outside of this feeling and confidence. A truth which has been neither experienced nor

lived remains beyond us, and is for us as if it were not.¹ The child's confidence of which I speak rests, then, solely upon practical experience such as is within the powers of the child. He believes in his father's authority because his father inspires him with confidence and he has felt his authority.

Later, when he is at an age to reason and reflect, he may be able to conclude, from what he knows and from what he has seen, that his father is *this* or *that*. This will be a doctrine about his father; but before formulating this doctrine he will have lived by his faith, will have been happy in it, will have been his father's disciple, will have obeyed him even in things which he has not always understood.

In the same way we, if we consider ourselves competent to discern in the words of Jesus about himself any affirmations which explain what he is, which aid us to understand the source of the good he has done us, to comprehend the cause of

¹ "En religion toute vérité hors de nous n'est ni possédée ni connue." Vinet, *Nouvelles Études évangéliques*, second edition, page 368.

the salvation we have found in him and experienced in our souls, very well, let us try! Let us be theologians, for it is the business of theologians to discuss these things.

Some one may say that Jesus was simply a holy man, and that his divinity was purely moral. Another may discover in him the second person of the Trinity, as the Athanasian Symbol sets him forth. The latter may, perhaps, be right: we pre-judge nothing, we condemn *a priori* no formula, no dogmatic decree of the Church. We only say that all that comes after faith in Jesus and assurance of salvation possessed in him. The drowning man clings to his savior, holds fast to him, makes himself one with him, and afterward, when he is saved, he may put to himself questions about his savior, and ask himself who this may be who was strong enough to save him; but he began by having confidence in him. Intellectual theories come afterward; and the simple believer who has not time to study, and who neither can nor ought to accept blindly the teachings of the Church, experiences the salvation which is in

Jesus Christ, and says, “Whether this man be a sinner or not, I know not: one thing I know: whereas I was blind, now I see.”¹

¹ John ix. 15.

CONCLUSION

WE have contemplated Jesus, have sought to see him as he was, to hear him as entirely and as truly as possible ; we have tried to know him : but it was impossible for our curiosity to remain disinterested. Yet it must do so, says the historian, if you desire a perfectly authentic testimony and a perfectly faithful picture. We cannot consent to consider such a position the true one. The abstraction of the intellect is always withering to the heart, and how shall we admit that in this case the heart has not its word to say ? To confine ourselves to saying of Jesus, "I admire him," without saying to him, "I believe in thee," — would not this be to condemn ourselves beforehand to have only a sterile acquaintance with him, insufficient and incomplete ?

But how shall we reach the point of saying "I believe" ? Historical testimony cannot suffice : it is impossible to prove

irrefutably that Christianity is true. Formerly men based their apologetic on the miracles, and the prophecies that were supposed to have come true; but this method is outworn and absolutely overthrown.

Shall we, then, attempt to show that Christianity is true because it responds to the needs of the human soul, and because there is a pre-established harmony between man and the gospel? Vinet was the eloquent and fully persuaded defender of this sort of apologetic. But is it entirely adapted to the present requirements of thought? Can it restore in our modern world belief in the Biblical revelation and in Christian verities? Many dispute it.

Yet the subjective method is the only possible method to-day. We must adhere closely to moral truth, — never call evil good and good evil: keep and conserve the great and unassailable certitudes, cling to them, and never on any pretext or for any reason let go of this plank of safety. Here effort is necessary. Men must will, — must will never to sacrifice conscience, will to remain faithful to duty, will to do

what Jesus called the will of God.¹ Then one has faith. This faith is an act of will, but it is not blind ; it is the faith born of the experience of him whose eyes have been opened.

It is impossible to prove that Jesus was not a “sinner ;” but I would say to the non-believer, it is impossible for you to prove to me that he was one. And that is sufficient for me, for “whereas I was blind, now I see.”² I admit that my experience is wholly subjective ; but precisely because it is subjective it is sufficient for me, for it is I who have had it.

But it must be had ; and let Christians not forget that they are strong only so far as they are extraordinary men, supernatural men. The affirmation of the supernatural on their lips is useless if the supernatural does not blaze forth in their lives. The great objection to Christianity is precisely this, — the insufficiency of Christian lives. When Christians show that Jesus Christ has changed them, that the preaching of the preparation of the kingdom by the renewing of hearts is as powerful as formerly, then Jesus Christ

¹ John vii. 17.

² John ix. 25.

himself will be proved ; his gospel will be saved.

During his entire ministry, whatever might be the passing events and the external circumstances of his life, Jesus was absolutely and irrefragably convinced that righteousness would triumph, that goodness would be conqueror, that the kingdom of God would come. This conviction was the strength and joy of his life. To this certitude was joined another, ever growing brighter and stronger in his soul, that the triumph of righteousness, of the right and the good, would be brought about by him, and that he should be the hero of the victory to come.

In presence of such a being, a being who had such moral greatness and such compassion, who possessed so absolute a conviction, who made such unheard-of demands, who showed so entire a devotion, and who enjoyed a life in God and by him so deep, so intense, so evidently certain, the exclamation of Thomas is not too strong ; it bursts from our hearts and lips ; we utter to Jesus this cry of obedience and adoration, “ My Lord and my God ! ”¹

¹ John xx. 28.

I close this second volume at the arrival of Jesus at Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, in the beginning of the month of October in the year 29. There remains for me to describe the few months which preceded his death, his trial, his execution, and, finally, his life beyond the tomb, his resurrection. This will be the subject of a third volume ; and thus I shall complete the treatment of the three questions which my general title presupposes, — the person, the authority, and the work of Jesus, — questions to which, as I hope, many pages of the present volume have already made answer.

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